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EXPANDING UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING ROLE POSES RISK FOR AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations has enjoyed a number of successes over the past four years. It helped defuse violent conflicts in Angola, El Salvador, Namibia, and Nicaragua. And the 28-nation coalition that defeated Iraqi aggression in 1990-1991 was organized under U.N. auspices. Nevertheless, the U.N. had less to do with those successes than many people think. Far more important were aggressive American diplomacy and the end of the Cold War. The undeserved praise for the U.N. has led some to overestimate the world body's effectiveness, and to prescribe for the U.N. an imprudently large role in maintaining world peace.

The U.N.'s role in peacekeeping already has grown in several ways. U.N. peacekeeping is expanding into peace-enforcement—the enforcement of cease-fires and the provision of humanitarian aid backed by force. Now there is talk of forming a standing U.N. army that could be rushed to trouble spots around the world. This enlargement of U.N. power changes the purposes of peacekeeping and threatens to bog down U.N. forces in ancient regional quarrels and bitter civil wars. Moreover, it leaves wasteful and ineffective U.N. bureaucrats with more discretion to interfere in the internal affairs of member states.

Unprecedented Power. Until recently, U.N. peacekeeping forces were a tool wielded by ad hoc coalitions of U.N. member states, rather than an institutionalized force controlled by the U.N. bureaucracy. Now that is changing. In Cambodia, Somalia, and Yugoslavia, the U.N. bureaucracy and the Secretary General have gained almost unprecedented decision-making power. Unlike past U.N. operations, no superpower or group of states is taking the lead. And in each case at least one indigenous faction hostile to the U.N. presence is beyond the control of outside powers. If current trends continue, U.N. peacekeepers easily could find themselves drawn into a war in each of these three countries.

The U.N. is sailing into uncharted waters in its new peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, some U.N. boosters, including U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and U.S. Senators Paul Simon and Joseph Biden, believe that the U.N. should cruise at full speed ahead. They have called for the equivalent of a standing U.N. army; for shifting America's share of the cost of U.N. peacekeeping from the State Department budget to the

defense budget; and for making American troops available to the Security Council to fight U.N.-sanctioned wars that may have nothing to do with defending U.S. national security.

Cause for Concern. Even George Bush has strayed from his usual prudence. In a speech before the United Nations General Assembly on September 21, he directed the U.S. Secretary of Defense to place new importance on peacekeeping, ordering him to “emphasize training of combat, engineering and logistical units for the full range of peacekeeping and humanitarian activities.”¹

Although Bush so far has resisted calls to back a standing U.N. army, there is cause for concern. Bush failed to clarify the conditions under which American peacekeeping troops would be deployed. Inasmuch as the new U.N. peacekeeping operations are beginning to resemble war more than peace, American peacekeeping troops could be sent to fight, and possibly die, in Yugoslavia, Somalia, or other distant countries where the U.S. has little or no security interests at stake.

Not only are American lives at stake, so is American money. Expanded U.N. responsibilities for peacekeeping would be financed to a large degree by American taxpayers, who pay for approximately 30 percent of U.N. peacekeeping costs. The cost of U.N. peacekeeping activities has soared from \$233 million in 1987 to an anticipated \$2.5 billion in 1992. The peacekeeping operation for Cambodia alone already costs over \$1 billion a year, or almost as much as the entire budget for the U.N. Secretariat. The American contribution to U.N. peacekeeping forces also has soared from \$81 million in fiscal 1990 to \$460 million in fiscal 1993.

Given these concerns about the direction of U.N. peacekeeping, it is important that America follow certain guidelines. The U.S. should:

- ◆ **Rule out sending American troops to fight in Cambodia, Somalia, or Yugoslavia.** The U.S. has little or no economic or strategic interests in these countries. The lives of American soldiers should not be put at risk unless these interests are endangered.
- ◆ **Reject a U.N. standing army.** Peacekeeping operations sometimes call for the use of armed force. When this occurs, the U.N. forfeits its role as a neutral third party and instead becomes partisan. At that point, peacekeepers become targets, like the U.S. Marines did in Lebanon in October 1983. That could leave the peacekeepers with two options, neither of which is acceptable: 1) to escalate peace-enforcement into a war; or 2) to withdraw without completing the mission. A standing army will accomplish little aside from tempting the U.N. into places it should avoid.
- ◆ **Retain America’s ability to act unilaterally, without consulting the U.N., on issues important to American security interests.** Frequent use by America of the U.N. could make future presidents reluctant to defend U.S. interests without first gaining U.N. backing. Therefore, America should seek help from the U.N. only when both a critical national interest and an important principle of international law are at stake. Examples from the past include releasing hostage diplomats in

1 “Excerpts from Address by President to the UN,” *The New York Times*, August 22, 1992, p. A14.

Iran, fighting aggression against Kuwait, and bringing peace to southern Africa and Central America.

- ◆ **Reduce the U.S. percentage of contributions to U.N. peacekeeping operations.** The U.S. already pays more than its fair share of peacekeeping costs. If the U.N. continues to expand its peacekeeping missions, the cost surely will rise further. At a time when the budgets of many government programs are being cut, Congress should lower the U.S. percentage from 30 percent to a maximum of 25 percent.
- ◆ **Resist efforts to include peacekeeping expenditures in the Defense Department budget, rather than the State Department's.** Unlike other countries which pay their U.N. contributions through a variety of government ministries, the U.S. makes all of its contributions to the U.N. through the State Department. This centralized funding allows the U.S. to have a unified U.N. policy, rather than several conflicting policies. Furthermore, paying peacekeeping costs out of the defense budget, as proposed by Senator Simon, would reduce funds available for the military's primary mission—defending the United States.

THE HISTORY OF PEACEKEEPING

Since its founding in 1945, the U.N. has conducted 26 peacekeeping operations. These can be broken down onto five categories. They are: 1) Decolonization/Post-World War II; 2) Arab-Israeli conflict; 3) Cold War era without a superpower confrontation; 4) End of the Cold War; and 5) Post-Cold War.

As those categories demonstrate, the role of U.N. peacekeeping changed as the international order changed. After World War II, U.N. peacekeeping efforts were concerned with the withdrawal of the Eu-

Definitions of Peacekeeping

"Peacekeeping" has taken on a variety of meanings. Depending on the context, it has been used interchangeably with "peace-enforcement" to mean both enforcing a cease-fire and rolling back aggression. To avoid confusion, clear definitions are necessary. They are:

Peacekeeping: Sending lightly armed soldiers from neutral countries into an area of conflict, usually to preserve a cease-fire and provide a buffer between warring combatants. Peacekeeping also involved election monitoring, as well as verification of demobilization agreements. Peacekeepers arrive with the consent of all parties, and use their weapons only in self-defense.

Peace-enforcement: Peace-enforcement is called for when peacekeeping goes awry. If a cease-fire breaks down, or a revolt breaks out, or the peacekeepers lose the support of one side to a conflict and become a target, peace-enforcers will fight until peace is restored. Thus far, peace-enforcement has only been applied in the Congo from 1960 to 1964. However, Secretary General Boutros-Ghali believes peace-enforcement should be heavily emphasized today, and he has recommended that the U.N. create the equivalent of a standing peace-enforcement army.

U.N. Warmaking: The formation of a coalition of U.N. member states to fight an aggressor nation. Only twice in the U.N.'s history have international forces waged war with the approval of the Security Council: the 1950-1953 Korean War and the 1991 Gulf War. In obvious contrast to peacekeeping, U.N. warmaking is undertaken without the consent of all parties. Although in Korea and Iraq military force was used to repel invading armies, some people now talk about U.N. warmaking to end human rights abuses within a country's own borders—such as in Serbia and Bosnia.

ropean powers from their African and Asian colonies. Overlapping this period of decolonization was the Cold War era, in which the U.N.'s peacekeeping powers were diminished by the U.S.-U.S.S.R. conflict and the veto right each country has in the Security Council. The U.N. played a relatively successful peacekeeping role, however, at times when the superpowers were not in direct conflict. Examples: The 1962 civil war in Yemen and the 1964 and 1974 Cyprus crises. The U.N. also became involved where superpower allies were at war, such as in several of the Arab-Israeli crises. At the end of the Cold War, the U.N. helped the Soviet Union and the U.S. disentangle themselves from conflicts in Angola, El Salvador, and other places in the Third World. Finally, in the post-Cold War era, the U.N. sometimes has followed the U.S. lead, as in the Persian Gulf War. At other times, such as in the former Yugoslavia, the U.N. has lurched into operations without much support from the major powers.

U.N. OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA, SOMALIA, AND YUGOSLAVIA

Emboldened by the success of the Gulf War, the U.N. has undertaken a number of peacekeeping operations since the end of the Cold War. The largest of these have occurred in Cambodia and Yugoslavia. A smaller undertaking exists in Somalia. These two large missions will involve more than 35,000 personnel in the field at a total cost of \$2.5 billion over an eighteen-month period. Although these operations will have little impact on U.S. interests, American taxpayers will foot the bill for 30.4 percent of their cost, or \$760 million. Despite this huge sum, there has been little debate in Washington over the cost and benefits of these U.N. efforts.

The U.N. and Cambodia. The largest U.N. peacekeeping operation today is in Cambodia. Three rival guerrilla groups have been fighting the Vietnamese-installed puppet government of Cambodia since 1979.² Last October the U.S., China, and the Soviet Union brokered a peace agreement among the four parties. At that time, a cease-fire was put in place; it has been repeatedly violated. The U.N. plans to help implement the peace treaty by monitoring the cease-fire, assisting the repatriation of between 350,000 and 400,000 Cambodian refugees now in Thailand, and demobilizing 70 percent of the military forces. The U.N. will also help verify whether troops remain inside their camps when elections take place in April 1993. Moreover, U.N. personnel will help clear thousands of land mines and oversee the national elections. Finally, the U.N. will help run five important government ministries until the newly elected government comes to power: the ministries of defense, foreign affairs, information, finance, and public security.

To accomplish this, the U.N. Security Council authorized on February 28, 1992, the formation of the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). UNTAC consists of 15,900 troops, 3,600 police, and about 2,400 civilians drawn from 33 countries. This massive effort will cost the U.N. \$1.9 billion, of which the U.S. will pay \$516 million. The U.N. also will spend an additional \$900 million in voluntary contributions to repatriate Cambodian refugees.

2 The three guerilla groups are the Khmer Rouge, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, and the National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia.

HISTORY OF U.N. PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Operation	Date	Purpose	Cost*	Maximum Strength
Decolonization/Aftermath of World War II				
U.N. Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)	1949 - present	Monitor cease-fire in Jammu and Kashmir	\$77,000,000*	102 troops
U.N. Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL)	1958	Monitor infiltration of arms and troops into Lebanon from Syria	\$3,697,742	591 observers
U.N. Operation in the Congo (ONUC)	1960-1964	Render military assistance, restore civil order	\$400,130,793	19,828 troops
U.N. Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA)	1962-1963	Keep order and administer W. New Guinea pending transfer to Indonesia	\$32,386,420	1,576 troops
U.N. Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM)	1963-1964	Monitor infiltration into Yemen across Saudi border	\$1,849,995	189 troops
U.N. Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP)	1964-present	Maintain order; since 1974, also to monitor buffer zone separating Greek and Turkish communities	\$665,000,000*	6,411 troops
U.N. India-Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM)	1965-1966	Monitor cease-fire in 1965 India-Pakistan War	\$1,713,280	96 observers
U.N. Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	1991 - present	Conduct referendum on independence vs. joining Morocco	\$180,617,000	1,995 personnel, (300 police and 1,695 military)
Arab-Israeli Conflict				
U.N. Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO)	1948 - present	Monitor cease-fire along Israeli borders	\$375,000,000*	572 troops
U.N. Emergency Force (UNEF I)	1956-1967	Separate Egyptian and Israeli forces in Sinai	\$214,249,000	6,073 troops
U.N. Emergency Force (UNEF II)	1973-1979	Separate Egyptian and Israeli forces in Sinai	\$446,487,000	6,973 troops
U.N. Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)	1974 - present	Monitor separation of Syrian and Israeli forces on Golan Heights	\$490,000,000*	1,450 troops
U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)	1978 - present	Establish buffer zone between Israel and Lebanon	\$1.99 billion*	6,942 troops
Cold War Era without Superpower Confrontation				
Mission of the Representative of the Secretary General in the Dominican Republic (DOMREP)	1965-1966	Monitor cease-fire	\$276,000	2 observers
U.N. Iran-Iraq Observer Group (UNIIMOG)	1988-1991	Monitor cease-fire of Iran-Iraq War	\$190,000,000	828 military and 105 civilian staff

Note: * Estimate through 1991.

Source: *The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping* (New York: United Nations, 1990); William J. Durch and Barry M. Blechman, *Keeping the Peace: The United Nations in the New World Order* (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1992); Marjorie Anne Browne, "United Nations Peacekeeping: Historical Overview and Current Issues" (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 31, 1990); Marjorie Anne Browne, "United Nations Peacekeeping: Issues for Congress" (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, July 6, 1992); and Central Intelligence Agency, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, 1992."

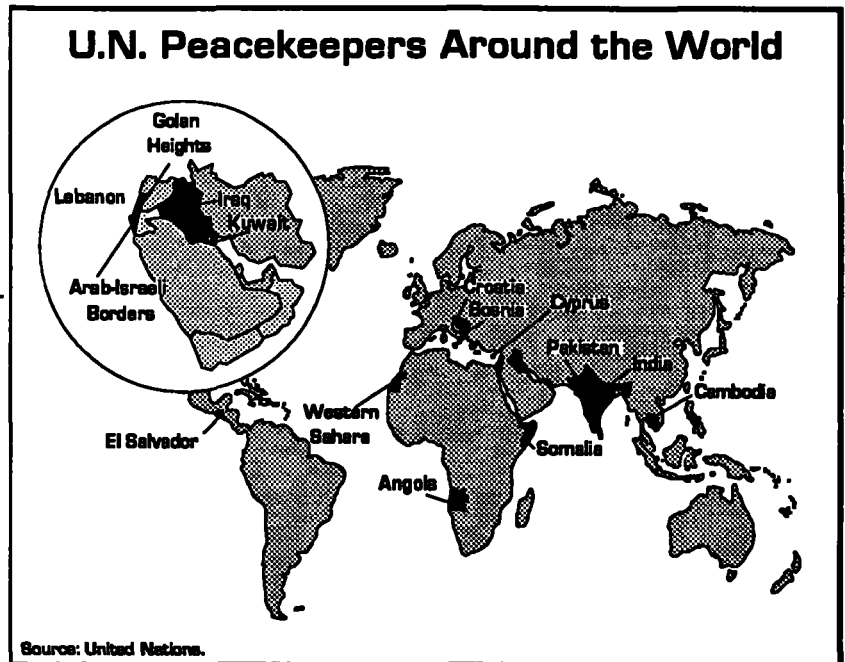
U.N. PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (Con't)

Operation	Date	Purpose	Cost	Maximum Strength
End of Cold War				
U.N. Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP)	1988-1990	Monitor withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan	\$14,029,010	50 observers
U.N. Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM I)	1989-1991	Monitor withdrawal of Cuban forces	\$25,000,000	70 military observers and 35 civilian staff
U.N. Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)	1989-1990	Supervise transition of Namibia from South African rule to independence	\$416,162,000	7,500 troops
U.N. Mission in Central America (ONUCA)	1989-1991	Monitor for arms and troop infiltration; demobilize Nicaraguan Contras	\$83,000,000**	1,098 personnel, primarily military observers
U.N. Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II)	1991 - present	Monitor general cease-fire and creation of new joint army; repatriate refugees	\$250,000,000***	440 troops, 175 civilian
U.N. Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL)	1991 - present	Monitor human rights violations, elections	\$23,000,000	1,083 personnel, (695 police and 388 military)
Post-Cold War				
U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM)	1991 - present	Monitor buffer zone after Gulf War	\$72,000,000 ***	250 troops
U.N. Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC)	1991 - present	Maintain cease-fire; establish mine-clearing program	\$39,000,000	1,212 personnel, including 1,172 military
U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)	1992 - present	Supervise government functions and eventual elections while rebuilding the country and disarming the factions; resettle refugees	\$1.9 billion	22,000 personnel, including 15,900 troops
U.N. Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR)	1992 - present	Monitor cease-fire; replace Yugoslav forces in Serbian areas of Croatia; protect deliveries of humanitarian supplies in Bosnia	\$634,000,000	15,000 troops
U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM)	1992 - present	Monitor cease-fire; protect deliveries of humanitarian aid	\$23,000,000	500 troops

Note: ** In nominal dollars *** Estimate through 1992.

Source: *The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping* (New York: United Nations, 1990); William J. Durch and Barry M. Blechman, *Keeping the Peace: The United Nations in the New World Order* (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1992); Marjorie Anne Browne, "United Nations Peacekeeping: Historical Overview and Current Issues" (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 31, 1990); Marjorie Anne Browne, "United Nations Peacekeeping: Issues for Congress" (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, July 6, 1992); and Central Intelligence Agency, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, 1992."

Complicating matters is the fact that one of the guerrilla groups, the communist Khmer Rouge, has shown little desire to disarm or participate in the peace process. The Khmer Rouge launched attacks after the October 1991 peace agreement to secure more territory. It shot down U.N. helicopters and refused to lay down its arms or permit U.N. peacekeepers into its territory. Considering the Khmer Rouge's brutal history of killing up to 1 million Cambodians from 1975 to 1979, the Khmer Rouge is not likely to accept a peaceful political solution to the war. If the Khmer Rouge decides to resume its fight for total power, thousands more U.N. troops would be needed to defeat it.



The U.N. and Yugoslavia. The other large U.N. peacekeeping operation is in the former Yugoslavia. When Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in June 1991, Serbs living in Croatia rebelled against the newly created state. The Serb-dominated Yugoslav army then invaded Croatia, ostensibly to protect the Serbian minority living there. After Serbian troops occupied about one-third of Croatia, U.N. Special Envoy Cyrus Vance negotiated a cease-fire in January 1992. On February 21, 1992, the U.N. Security Council voted to monitor the cease-fire by sending a 14,000-member peacekeeping mission called the U.N. Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR). The annual budget for this mission was set at \$634 million, of which the U.S. share is \$193 million.

Then it was Bosnia's turn. Fearing domination by the Muslim population, the Serbs, who comprise 31 percent of Bosnia's population, opposed independence. With support from the Serbian Republic, the Serbs quickly gained control over most of Bosnia, meeting strong resistance only in Sarajevo and the surrounding areas. Today a military stalemate exists between the Serbs and Bosnian Muslims.³

The civilian population of Sarajevo is endangered and short of food, medical supplies, and other necessities. Thousands of Muslims also have been driven from their homes in Serb-dominated areas and forced into detention centers where some have been starved, tortured, and killed. The Serbs, in turn, point to their own refugees from other areas of Bosnia.

3 In addition to problems with the ethnic Serbs, Bosnia has a problem with ethnic Croats, who make up 19 percent of Bosnia's population. With the help of the Croatian government, the Bosnian Croats seized about one-fifth of Bosnia.

Some 850 UNPROFOR troops were deployed at the Sarajevo airport in June to keep the airport open and to bring relief supplies to civilians. In August the UNPROFOR strength in Bosnia grew to 1,500. Their efforts have been frustrated by Serb shelling and Bosnian sniper fire. Thus far, at least four U.N. troops have been killed and 48 injured. More deaths are sure to follow.

A strong case can be made that Serbia is guilty of aggression against both Croatia and Bosnia, and that some Serbian leaders are guilty of "crimes against humanity" for pursuing "ethnic cleansing" of Serbian-occupied areas. There are growing demands for the European Community, the U.S., and particularly the U.N. to do more to halt the fighting. Many see Yugoslavia as an opportunity to transfer to the U.N. more power and responsibility for maintaining international security and safeguarding human rights.

The U.N. and Somalia. The third U.S. peacekeeping operation today is in Somalia. Since the overthrow of Somalian leader Siad Barre in January 1991, Somalia has been plunged into anarchy. Rival clans wage war against one another and armed gangs randomly terrorize and kill civilians. The food delivery system has collapsed, leaving as much as a third of Somalia's 6.7 million people to face starvation. To relieve the suffering, the International Committee of the Red Cross began relief efforts in early 1991. The U.N. agencies lagged behind, claiming that banditry, looting, and hijacking by the brutal armed gangs made food delivery difficult and dangerous.

The Security Council approved a United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in April to monitor the cease-fire and protect the delivery of humanitarian supplies. Unfortunately, the leader of the strongest armed force in Somalia, General Mohammed Farah Aidid, perceived U.N. peacekeepers to be a threat to his drive for power and withheld his permission for them to enter Somalia. Then, on August 12, along with other Somalian warlords, Aidid signed an agreement allowing 500 U.N. peacekeepers into Somalia to deliver food. More recently, however, he has refused to allow the U.N. to increase the size of that contingent by 3,000, and he has protested the deployment of four American warships carrying 2,100 U.S. Marines off the Somalian coast.

The U.S. Senate introduced a resolution on August 4, 1992, calling for the U.N. to distribute emergency food supplies to Somalia, using force if necessary.⁴ So far this has not occurred.

THE LIMITS OF PEACEKEEPING

Five years ago, before the Cold War ended, the idea of a U.N. army would never have been seriously considered. However, a series of peace agreements concluded with U.N. involvement since 1988 encouraged some to believe that the world body should become more active in seeking world peace. This sentiment largely is based on the success of U.N. peacekeeping operations in Angola, El Salvador, Namibia, and Nicaragua.

The Lessons of U.N. Peacekeeping. It is important to understand the real lessons of these U.N. peacekeeping operations. They are:

- ✓ **U.N. peacekeeping successes occurred where peace was brought about by parties other than the U.N. The U.N. stepped in only later to mediate and observe.**

Many of the world's violent conflicts pitted superpower allies against one another. In Angola, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and to a lesser degree Namibia, the opposing armies were allies of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. When the Cold War ended, the opposing sides realized that economic and military aid from the superpowers would decline. They decided to take the advice of their patrons and negotiate settlements. The U.N. was called in afterwards as a neutral third party to help implement parts of the agreements.

- ✓ **Acting on its own, the U.N. sometimes did more to perpetuate conflicts than to end them.**

Despite paralysis induced by the Cold War, the U.N. occasionally acted independently. For example, it took the side of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua's civil war. The International Court of Justice, a U.N. body, actually declared on June 27, 1986, that the Americans were violating international law by arming and training the Nicaraguan freedom fighters.⁵ In 1983, the U.N. General Assembly condemned "American aggression" in Nicaragua. Nevertheless, the presidential candidate favored by the freedom fighters—Violeta Chamorro—eventually defeated the Sandinistas in elections held largely because of the military, economic, and political pressure put on the Sandinistas by the U.S.-backed rebels. The U.N. General Assembly also repeatedly took the side of the Arabs against Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East. In one egregious case, the U.N. General Assembly in 1975 passed a resolution condemning Zionism as racism. The resolution was repealed only last year under pressure from the U.S.

- ✓ **When all parties to a conflict want the conflict to end, the U.N. can play an effective diplomatic role as an impartial negotiator.**

The U.N. peacekeeping operation in El Salvador illustrates this point. In El Salvador, the government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) were exhausted from fighting a twelve-year civil war. But the opposing sides deeply distrusted each other. They looked to the U.N. as a non-partisan third party that would help achieve their mutual goal of ending the war. The two sides signed a ceasefire agreement on January 15, 1992, that called for the U.N. to verify the ceasefire, demobilize rebel guerrillas, investigate human rights abuses, and monitor elections.

Lessons of Peace-enforcement and U.N. Warmaking. U.N. peace-enforcement and warmaking, unlike peacekeeping, involve the use of armed force. Sometimes, as with the 1960-1964 Congo crisis, peacekeeping can slide into peace-enforcement. Since the end of the Cold War, there have been a number of calls for the U.N. to use armed force, most recently in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. However, a look at past military operations conducted by the U.N., shows mixed results.

5 Nicaragua sued the United States in the International Court of Justice to get a ruling that by training, arming, equipping, financing, and supplying the Nicaraguan rebels the U.S. violated international law. The U.S. claimed that Nicaragua aided communist rebel movements throughout Central America, and that the U.S. and its allies, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras, were engaged in collective self-defense.

U.N. Military Operations

Country	Reason for Combat	Outcome
Korea (1950-1953)	North Korean aggression against South Korea	Aggression turned back at the cost of 33,000 American lives; long-term deployment of huge American force to insure cease-fire.
Congo (1960-1964)	Violence following decolonization; civil war	Peace restored; U.N. shaken by Soviet charges; 234 U.N. troops dead; cost of \$400 million (\$1.8 billion in 1991 dollars)
Iraq (1990-present)	Iraqi aggression against Kuwait	Aggression turned back; Iraqi leader still in power; some American troops remain in region; large part of Iraq still under U.N. control.

As the debate over "peacekeeping" in Yugoslavia and elsewhere makes clear, the U.N. could be drawn into more conflicts where it will use armed force. In the past, the U.N. was careful to secure the consent of all parties to a dispute before sending in peacekeeping troops, and the U.N. refrained, for the most part, in interfering in the internal conflicts of member states. Today, however, many are urging the U.N. to intervene more assertively in the internal affairs of member states to end human rights violations.

Before the U.S. heeds their advice, the lessons of past experiences with peace-enforcement and U.N. warmaking should be reviewed. The lessons are:

- ✓ **The U.N. can only guarantee a cease-fire by deploying large numbers of ground troops.**

After the Korean Armistice, renewed communist aggression was deterred by the presence of tens of thousands of U.S. troops for the four decades following the war. In the future, to keep peace between an aggressor nation and its victimized neighbors, the U.N. might find it needs to keep in place a virtual army.

- ✓ **In volatile situations, circumstances can change and shatter the world consensus supporting a peacekeeping operation.**

In the 1960 civil war in the Congo, the U.S. and Soviet Union at first agreed to support the U.N. effort there. However, when the province of Katanga tried to secede in July 1960, the Soviets sided with the Congolese government and demanded that the U.N. fight the secessionists. U.N. troops subsequently took military action against the secessionists.

The Soviets quickly grew so disenchanted with the U.N. response that they refused to recognize the authority of Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld and called for replacing him with a troika of U.N. officials. Within two months of the arrival of U.N. troops in September 1960, the Congo's government dissolved. Four opposing camps, each with its own armed forces, claimed control over all or part of the country. At one point or another, each side felt the U.N. was working against it. This caused a series of attacks by various Congolese factions on the U.N. troops. In the end, 234 U.N. troops were killed, the organization spent over \$400 million (approximately \$1.8 billion in 1991 dollars) and was forced to float a bond issue to pay for the crisis. In 1965, shortly after U.N. peacekeeping troops left the Congo, Joseph Mobutu (now Mobutu Sese Seko) staged a coup. He has been dictator of Zaire (the country's name was changed in 1971) ever since and has been accused of cor-

ruption and violently suppressing political dissent. Today Zaire faces a political crisis that could lead again to civil war.⁶

- ✓ **Without the consent of all parties to a conflict, peacekeeping operations can quickly turn into dangerous and costly peace-enforcement operations.**

The U.N.'s experience in the Congo highlights the dangers of maintaining U.N. troops in places where they are no longer wanted by one or more of the parties. Another costly lesson was the dispatch of the Multinational Force (MNF) of American, British, French, and Italian troops to Lebanon to keep the peace following the assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel on September 15, 1982. Although this was not an official U.N. operation, it had the approval of U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar. While initially welcomed by many of Lebanon's warring factions, the MNF eventually became terrorist targets, culminating in the October 23, 1983, truck bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut that cost 241 lives.

LEARNING THE WRONG LESSON ABOUT U.N. PEACEKEEPING

Given the past history of U.N. peacekeeping, and the current crises in Yugoslavia, Cambodia, and Somalia, the question arises: What role should the U.N. play in maintaining world peace? In addressing this question, it is important to understand how recent U.N. successes in Angola, El Salvador, Iraq, and Nicaragua were achieved. There is a tendency to exaggerate the importance of the U.N.'s role in restoring peace in these cases. U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, for example, released a plan entitled "Agenda for Peace" on June 17 that gives too much credit and responsibility to the U.N. for maintaining world peace.

Boutros-Ghali's "Agenda for Peace." U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali's plan for future U.N. peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, and warmaking operations describes situations in which the U.N. will need to use force. The plan lacks specific details, but it contains a series of proposed graduated U.N. responses to international aggression. The Secretary General implies that there are major, medium, and minor degrees of aggression.⁷ He does not provide specific examples, but Boutros-Ghali has stated that the U.N. forces may perhaps never be sufficiently large or well enough equipped to deal with major international aggression.⁸ Presumably, Boutros-Ghali refers to major conflicts on the order of the 1939 German invasion of Poland, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, or perhaps even Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Boutros-Ghali, however, believes that the U.N. should be able to respond to a "threat posed by military force of a lesser order."⁹ Presumably, this represents medium aggression. The meaning of this also is not clear, but perhaps it is similar to Serbian aggression in former Yugoslavia. To combat this level of aggression, Boutros-Ghali recommends that the Security Council should resolve the crisis using troops voluntarily provided by U.N. mem-

6 See Thomas P. Sheehy, "For Zaire's Mobutu, the U.S.-Funded Party is Over," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum* No. 314, October 11, 1991.

7 The definition of "international aggression" may be expanding to include civil war that could affect regional peace.

8 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (New York: The United Nations, 1992), p. 25.

9 *Ibid.*

ber states, under the command of the Military Staff Committee (MSC). The U.N.'s Military Staff Committee is composed of the military chiefs of staff of the five permanent members of the Security Council. According to the U.N. Charter, they are "responsible under the Security Council for any armed forces placed at the disposal of the Security Council."¹⁰

The MSC has been inactive since 1947, primarily because of Cold War tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Union. It is unlikely to be resurrected in the near future because the permanent members have shown little desire to do so. Even if they wanted to activate the MSC, it would be difficult to reach an agreement in a common military doctrine, command structure, and other military considerations. Nor is it likely that many countries will make their troops available to the Security Council anytime soon.

At the bottom of Boutros-Ghali's scale of aggression is force used when something goes awry with peacekeeping, and the operation turns into peace-enforcement. This represents minor aggression. This could occur where U.N. forces are needed to restore or maintain a cease-fire. To accomplish this task, the Secretary General would recruit troops the same way he recruits peacekeeping forces: member nations would volunteer them. However, these troops would be more heavily armed than peacekeeping forces. And, most important, although they would be authorized by the Security Council, they would be under the command of the Secretary General.

Boutros-Ghali's plan in effect would provide the U.N. with a standing army. He has asked that 20 member states each, on 48 hours notice, provide the U.N. with 2,000 troops.¹¹ Presumably, this army would be used in low-intensity combat such as protecting food shipments in Somalia or maintaining a cease-fire in El Salvador. To pay for the program, Boutros-Ghali has suggested a \$50 million revolving fund for emergency humanitarian purposes and a \$1 billion peace endowment. Money for this would be raised partly by imposing an international sales tax on weapons and international air travel.

Senator Simon's Plan. Another plan for expanding the U.N.'s peacekeeping operations comes from Senator Paul Simon, the Democrat from Illinois. In legislation before the Committee on Governmental Affairs in April 1992, Simon proposed making U.N. peacekeeping activities a part of America's national defense. Simon's bill states that "United Nations peacekeeping contributes to a United States national security interest..." and maintains that, "the United States has a national security interest in fully funding its assessment for United Nations peacekeeping."¹² To protect this putative national security interest, Simon's legislation would fund U.S. contributions to U.N. peacekeeping operations out of the Defense Department budget. They currently come out of the State Department's budget.¹³

10 United Nations Charter, Article 47(2).

11 "Can the U.N. Handle Its New Credibility?" Interview with Boutros-Ghali, *USA Today*, September 21, 1992.

12 S. 2560, Section 1, (1), (2).

13 Two other notable pieces of legislation supporting peacekeeping are: The fiscal 1993 Defense Department Appropriation which allows the Secretary of Defense to spend \$300 million appropriated for operations or maintenance on emergency peacekeeping, and a Senate resolution sponsored by Joseph Biden urging the President to begin negotiations to make American troops available to the U.N. Security Council.

Flawed Conclusions. Trusting the Secretary General with military power requires an unwarranted leap of faith. The U.N.'s intervention in the Congo from 1960 to 1964, the only time in the past when this has been tried, generally is seen as an expensive disaster.

Boutros-Ghali's idea of activating the Military Staff Committee also is dangerous for America. The command of the Military Staff Committee presumably would shift periodically among the five permanent members of the Security Council. That means that four-fifths of the time someone other than an American would be in charge. Putting American troops under the command of a foreigner would undermine American influence over the outcomes of wars that could have tremendous international consequences. If the U.S. needs to protect its national security interests, it can find allies to help it do so without resorting to the cumbersome and often ineffective U.N. system.

Senator Simon's plan to change the mission of the U.S. Defense Department from one of protecting the U.S. to one of protecting the world is equally without merit. Although Simon's bill states that "peacekeeping contributes to a United States national security interest," he never adequately explains why this is the case. In fact, diverting Defense Department funds to pay for the U.N.'s burgeoning peacekeeping programs inevitably would mean a decrease in American security. The effect of Simon's bill would be to disguise peacekeeping costs as defense costs, and diminish the amount of money spent on real defense needs. It also would detract from what should be the U.S. military's primary mission—defending the United States.

MYTHS ABOUT U.N. PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

The unrealistic recommendations of Simon and other U.N. boosters rests on a number of myths. They are:

Myth #1: U.N. peacekeeping operations save the U.S. money because the U.N. does collectively what the U.S. would have to do individually.

Fact: The rapidly expanding U.N. peacekeeping programs actually add to U.S. costs because they often involve the U.S. in peacekeeping efforts that Washington otherwise would avoid. For example, the U.S. has little or no national interest at stake in Yugoslavia, the Western Sahara, or Somalia, but will have to spend \$254 million because of U.N. involvement in these far-flung crisis areas.

Myth #2: Allowing the U.N. to develop a military capability, such as the Military Staff Committee (MSC), will relieve the U.S. military from involvement.

Fact: In the two major U.N. military operations, against North Korea and Iraq, the U.S. supplied the bulk of the U.N. coalition's military forces involved in the fighting. In cases such as Yugoslavia or Somalia, where the U.S. has little or no national interest at stake, Washington would not send troops unless they were part of the U.N. operations. Thus, instead of relieving the U.S. from military involvement, the U.N. would actually get the U.S. into a war that it would otherwise choose to avoid.

Myth #3: Multilateral, U.N.-sanctioned military actions are preferable to unilateral, U.S. military ones because the imprimatur of the U.N. implies the backing of international law.

Fact: By repeatedly seeking U.N. approval for military actions, the U.S. may establish a precedent that future presidents will be loath to break. If the U.N. stamp of approval is perceived to be necessary for every use of force, the U.N. Security Council effectively will be given a veto over U.S. military actions. This could prevent the U.S. from acting unilaterally even when its national security interests are at stake. For example, it is unlikely that the U.N. Security Council would have approved the 1983 invasion of Grenada or the 1986 bombing of Libya.

Moreover, U.N.-sanctioned military action carries no special moral force or legal justification. The U.N. is not a body representing global democracy, where each nation supposedly represents the democratic will of its people. The U.N. is made up of democracies and dictatorships, some like Iran, Iraq, and Syria, which are oppressive to their own people. Its voice is that of nation-states, and not of the world's people.

GUIDELINES FOR U.S. POLICY ON U.N. PEACEKEEPING

In the euphoria following the end of the Cold War, and the new found respect shown the U.N., a danger arises that policymakers will let their misguided idealism get the better of them. Congress and the President should take a clear-headed, realistic look at U.N. peacekeeping and establish some priorities for U.S. policy. These should be: 1) defend American national security; 2) protect the American taxpayer; and 3) avoid surrendering American sovereignty to the U.N. bureaucracy. To accomplish these goals, the United States should:

- ✓ **Rule out sending American troops to fight in Cambodia, Somalia, or Yugoslavia.**

The U.S. has little or no economic and strategic interests in Cambodia, Somalia and Yugoslavia. American soldiers should not be put at risk if U.S. national interests are not endangered.¹⁴ Additionally, the United States Constitution limits the war-making powers of the President and Congress, restricting their use of that power to circumstances where they "provide for the common defense."¹⁵ It is questionable whether strictly humanitarian purposes, such as fighting Somalian gangs to feed starving Somalian civilians, qualifies as "common defense."

Furthermore, it is easy to underestimate the resistance that a U.N. force would face. Combatants fighting a war in their own country have more to lose than foreigners who fight for humanitarian purposes. The Khmer Rouge and the Serbs, for example, will continue to fight, because they have to live with the result. But neither the U.S. nor any other country is likely to sustain casualties indefinitely to perform what essentially is a charitable service of little consequence to their national security.

- ✓ **Reject a U.N. standing army.**

The U.N. is a poorly run institution that should not be entrusted with preserving global peace. The U.N. has a workforce top-heavy with high-paid bureaucrats and light on field

14 See *Making the World Safe for America: A U.S. Foreign Policy Blueprint*, The Heritage Foundation, April 1992.

15 Preamble to the United States Constitution.

workers. Although peacekeeping operations probably are better run than some of the other tasks handled by the U.N., significant and costly lapses occur regularly. For example, after the Namibia operation, the U.N. donated \$26 million of its equipment, including \$18 million worth of jeeps and trucks, to the Namibian government. When the U.N. needed them in neighboring Angola, the Namibians refused to return them.¹⁶

Sophisticated military missions such as those performed in the Gulf War can only be accomplished by a handful of the countries in the world. These would include the United States, France, Britain, and their regional allies. It is a fantasy to believe that the U.N., even with its own standing army, could achieve military goals without the aid of one or more of those nations. And none of those nations is likely to sacrifice its soldiers, equipment, and money to fight someone else's battles.

- ✓ **Retain America's ability to act unilaterally, without consulting the U.N., on issues important to American security interests.**

Releasing hostages in Iran, fighting aggression in Iraq, and bringing peace to Central America were important American goals sought by the world community. It made sense for the U.S. to use the U.N. in these cases. But repeatedly seeking U.N. approval for the use of armed force is a double-edged sword. It could lock the U.S. into a position where future presidents grow increasingly reluctant to act unilaterally to defend U.S. interests without first gaining U.N. backing. Therefore, the U.S. should be cautious about approaching the U.N. to endorse American military actions. There may be times when the U.N. endorsement is desirable, but there will be times when it is not. When its vital interests are at stake, Washington always must reserve its right to take unilateral action if necessary.

- ✓ **Reduce the U.S. percentage of contributions to U.N. peacekeeping operations.**

Many congressmen were unpleasantly surprised when Secretary of State James Baker on March 5 requested an additional \$350 million for U.N. peacekeeping for fiscal 1992. Congress had already appropriated \$107 million for that purpose. Baker also informed Congress that he would request \$460 million for U.N. peacekeeping in the fiscal 1993 budget. By comparison, peacekeeping costs in 1990 were only \$81 million. If the U.N. continues to expand its peacekeeping missions, the cost surely will rise further.

The U.S. pays 30.4 percent of the peacekeeping costs for most U.N. missions.¹⁷ This percentage is higher than and in addition to the 25 percent of general U.N. operating costs which the U.S. also pays. At a time when the budgets of many government programs are being cut, Congress should limit funds for U.N. peacekeeping to a maximum of 25 percent of U.N. peacekeeping costs.

To accomplish this, the formula for U.N. peacekeeping assessments needs to be renegotiated. If not, the U.S. will have to withhold payment, or use its veto power more often to prevent costly and unpromising peacekeeping operations.

16 "Misteps on the Path to Peace," *The Washington Post*, August 22, 1992, p. A14.

17 Of the thirteen current U.N. peacekeeping operations, two are funded from the U.N. regular budget (UNTSO and UNMOGIP), one is funded through voluntary contributions (Cyprus), and ten are financed from their own separate accounts.

✓ **Resist efforts to include peacekeeping expenditures in the Defense Department budget, rather than the State Department's.**

Moving peacekeeping costs into the Defense Department, as proposed by Senator Simon, would weaken the mission of the U.S. military. Diverting funds from defense to U.N. peacekeeping would harm the military's primary mission, which is to defend the United States.

Moreover, the large size of the defense budget would make it easier to hide huge increases in U.N. peacekeeping costs. A 100 percent increase in peacekeeping costs would represent less than a one-fifth of one percent increase in the defense budget, while it would be about a ten percent increase in the State Department's budget. These rapidly expanding costs could cut into the ability of the U.S. to develop and maintain the high-tech arsenal that brought victory in the Gulf War with minimal casualties. The end result of greater humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts funded at the expense of the Defense Department may be higher American casualties in the event of another war.

CONCLUSION

Americans should discourage the trend toward the U.N. using armed force to solve violent conflicts. If this trend continues, it could undermine U.S. security interests, sacrifice American troops for obscure causes unrelated to defending the U.S., and cost American taxpayers increasing amounts of money.

Throughout American history, the U.S. has done a good job of defending itself without the aid of a world body like the U.N. Even if the United Nations was an efficient, neutral, democratically elected body dedicated to human rights, and possessing an outstanding record in resolving violent conflicts, Americans should refuse to put their national security in its hands. In reality, the U.N. bureaucracy is wasteful and corrupt. Many U.N. member states are dictatorships with little regard for human rights. And its history of peace enforcement and warmaking in such places as the Congo and Korea has not been successful.

The U.N. can be a useful institution so long as Washington does not lose sight of U.S. interests. However, Americans should avoid entrusting that body with more authority than it has earned, and they should refuse to let the U.N. lead America into military entanglements where Americans have no interests at stake. To accomplish that, the Congress and the President should never send "peacekeeping" troops into potential war-zones like Yugoslavia and Cambodia, and they should reject the idea of a standing U.N. army. War and peace are still political exercises, and the U.N. alone is not equipped to make either. Only the world's sovereign nations—sometimes working through the U.N. and sometimes not—can effectively do that.

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