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A GRAND ILLUSION: UNITED NATIONS REFORM

by

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Preface

From 1997 to 1999, I was assigned to the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It was quite an experience. I was one of approximately 13 US military officers who were "loaned" to the UN to support the objectives of Presidential Decision Directive 25. As I reflect on my tour with the UN, it reminds me of an excerpt from the Dr. Seuss book, *Oh, the Places You'll Go:*

> You can get so confused
> that you'll start in to race
> down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace
> and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space,
> headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.

This paper was inspired by my UN assignment. It was eye opening, and not always in a good way. At times, I felt like Gulliver on one of his fabled travels. The UN's Byzantine nature often made me often wonder how anything ever got done in New York. In any case, I have been given an opportunity to explore one of the things that left me scratching my head. Specifically, why the UN's ability to effectively and efficiently manage its peace operations has proven so resistant to real reform and lasting change. This paper is my humble attempt at an explanation to this important question.

I am indebted to the support, prodding, and patience of my research advisor, Steve Purtle. I would also like to thank LTC John Otte, USA, for his guidance and sense of humor. Together, we devoted a great deal of time and energy doing what our nation asked of us, trying hard to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. You may find some of what follows to be slightly irreverent but as Dave Barry says, "I am not making this up!"

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Abstract

The effectiveness and efficiency of the UN's management of its peace operations has been under intense scrutiny since the early 1990s. US policy on multilateral peace operations, Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25), was partly intended to help the UN improve its operational capabilities. Despite implementing almost all of the reform proposals contained within PDD 25, the UN remained unable to effectively and efficiently managing its peace operations. In particular, shortcomings persisted in the areas of mission planning, command and control arrangements, and force sustainment. Two reasons explain why the UN has been unable to achieve real reform and lasting change. First, the fundamentally political nature of the UN both is responsible for and tends to exacerbate its shortcomings. Second, conceptual gridlock has paralyzed the UN, rendering it incapable of formulating a coherent strategy and doctrine to govern its operations. Based on these findings, it is clear that the UN's management of its peace operations is about as efficient as can be expected. Consequently, the world community should no longer look to the UN to play a leading role in the international security system. That role should be reserved for states, particularly great powers like the US. Scholarly research was the principle methodology used in this paper. Secondary sources were augmented by primary sources, interviews, and personal experience.

Part 1

Trouble Ahead

Great problems usually come to the United Nations because governments have been unable to think of anything else to do about them. The United Nations is a last-ditch, last resort affair, and it is not surprising that the organization should often be blamed for failing to solve problems that have already been found to be insoluble by governments.

— U Thant

There are signs posted throughout the common areas of the United Nations Headquarters in New York that read "Smoking Is Discouraged." These instructions are more a reflection of the UN's true character than the organization might like to admit. What they announce is this: we are an organization that has trouble making a decision; if we do make a decision, it will be watered down so that no one is offended; and, we have a hard time with rules around here, so feel free to do whatever you want. This attitude captures perfectly the way UN peace operations are planned, conducted, and sustained—which is a sobering thought indeed.

Admittedly, this is a harsh assessment. The UN has made the world a safer place; hundreds of thousands of people are alive and living in improved conditions because of the actions of UN peacekeepers. It has been a force for peace in a century marred by bloodshed. UN peacekeepers have performed admirably in desperate situations, and under Security Council mandates that are often unattainable or militarily bankrupt. By the mid 1990s, however, it became clear that the organization had reached the limits of its effectiveness in the realm of international peace and security. Recognizing this, the US pressured the UN to reform and improve its capabilities to

manage peace operations. The UN and the US have expended a great deal of energy on UN reform—with precious little to show for it. It is therefore a legitimate question to ask why, despite these efforts, the UN's operational capabilities have remained so resistant to change.

The Plan

This paper will posit a tentative answer to this pertinent question. It will begin with a discussion of the relevant aspects of US policy on multilateral peace operations, Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25). The various US reform proposals contained in PDD 25 will be highlighted and then compared to the actual reforms made by the UN, which were quite extensive. Next, the UN's peacekeeping record since 1993-1994 will be analyzed. Although the UN has recorded some successes, there have been several glaring failures and indecisiveness in the face of humanitarian catastrophe. This mixed record is due primarily to continued shortcomings in the areas of mission planning, command and control arrangements, and force sustainment. This means that, despite implementing almost all of the US reform proposals, the UN remained unable to effectively and efficiently manage its peace operations. There are two reasons that explain why it has been so difficult for the UN to improve the management of its peace operations. First, the fundamentally political nature of the organization both is responsible for and tends to exacerbate the UN's shortcomings. Second, the UN is in the midst of a conceptual crisis, struggling to define how it should respond to threats to peace in the post-Cold War international security environment. This conceptual gridlock frustrates the development of a coherent strategy and doctrine to govern its operations. Consequently, real reform and lasting change has proven elusive, and the management of UN peace operations continues to be less than effective. The paper will conclude with an acknowledgement that the UN's operational capabilities are about as effective and efficient as possible, and the international community

should no longer look to the UN to play a leading role in the international security system. That role should be reserved for states, particularly great powers like the US. Based on these observations, some general recommendations for US policy makers will be suggested.

A Primer

Before beginning, however, it is helpful to briefly trace the evolution of UN peace operations since the first mission in 1948. Roughly three generations can be identified.[1] First generation, or traditional, peacekeeping characterized the Cold War period; it was consensual, uni-functional, and static in nature.[2] Typically, unarmed or lightly armed peacekeepers were placed between warring states to keep the antagonists apart, observe, and report. UN forces were expected to be politically impartial and militarily neutral. Second generation, or wider, peacekeeping emerged with the end of the Cold War; it is consensual, multifunctional, and dynamic in nature.[3] No longer simply interested in stabilizing a situation or maintaining the status quo, UN forces became active participants in the conflict resolution process within troubled states. Examples of the various types of wider peacekeeping are preventative deployment, protecting the delivery of humanitarian aid, electoral assistance, and nation building. Both traditional and wider peacekeeping gain their authority from Chapter VI of the UN Charter.[4] Third generation, or assertive, peacekeeping was also a product of the post-Cold War era; it is enforcing, uni-functional, and quasi-static in nature.[5] This type of peacekeeping frequently involves the threat or actual use of force. Because consent, impartiality, and neutrality are sometimes missing, it has been difficult to reconcile these operations with the core principles of either traditional or wider peacekeeping. Chapter VII of the UN Charter authorizes assertive peacekeeping.[6] With this primer thus concluded, it is now time to address US policy on multilateral operations and related UN reforms.

Notes

[1] Tamara Duffey, "UN Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War World," *Civil Wars* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 5-7.

[2] Taylor J. Wenteges, "Force, Function and Phase: Three Dimensions of UN Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 58.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Peacekeeping is not mentioned in the UN Charter but has been "improvised as an instrument of pragmatic diplomacy" (*General Guidelines for Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 1995), 3). Former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold coined the term.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Assertive peacekeeping should not be confused with full-scale peace enforcement actions, such as in Korea or the Gulf War. These operations, also authorized by Chapter VII, fall under the heading of collective security.

Part 2

The 800-Pound Gorilla

Peacekeeping can be one useful tool to help prevent and resolve conflicts before they pose direct threats to our national security.

— Presidential Decision Directive 25

With the end of the superpower confrontation and flush with success from the Gulf War, the US rediscovered the United Nations. There was no lack of candidates for multilateral action: as states disintegrated or fragmented, intrastate conflict and man-made humanitarian crises proliferated. The US, along with other permanent members of the Security Council, was now more inclined than ever before to support a UN-centric response to tackle these threats to international peace and security. Consequently, the overall number of new UN peacekeeping operations exploded. In the 40 years from 1948 to 1988, only 13 peace operations were mounted; since 1988, 40 operations were launched.[1] As the number of new missions multiplied in the early 1990s, the US struggled to define its role in multilateral peace operations and its expectations of the UN. The Bush Administration produced National Security Decision Directive 74 (NSDD 74) in 1992, which specifically addressed US support of UN peacekeeping operations. It was mostly devoted to strengthening the UN's peacekeeping capability, and endorsed many reforms that would re-surface in subsequent policy statements. Work on NSDD 74 was suspended after Bush's defeat in late 1992, and it was left to the incoming Clinton Administration to devise a more comprehensive policy.[2]

The US Lays Down the Gauntlet

President Clinton launched a thorough review of US peacekeeping policy almost immediately upon taking office in 1993. Initially, several high-level officials advocated a policy of "aggressive multilateralism," which sought to combine US leadership with an active commitment to participate in UN operations. The combination of the debacle in Somalia, mounting Congressional criticism of the UN, and a reluctant military ultimately tempered this enthusiasm and gave way to a more pragmatic approach. The resulting policy statement, Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25), was released in May 1994 and reasserted the primacy of national interests in guiding US responses to threats to international security. It envisioned multilateral peace operations as a tool of US foreign policy and set down rigorous criteria for future US participation in these operations.[3] It also sought to improve the UN's operational capabilities.

One of the primary goals of PDD 25 was to make UN operations more efficient and effective. As such, a significant part of the new policy addressed the UN's management of its peace operations. Many changes were recommended, most of which traced their origins back to NSDD 74. The US advocated a reconfiguration and expansion of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which is the principal Secretariat body responsible for planning, conducting, and sustaining UN peace operations. Specifically, the US urged the UN to create a Plans Division, to conduct advance planning and preparation for new and on-going operations; an Information and Research Division, to monitor open source information and maintain a 24-hour watch center linked to the field; an Operations Division, with a modern command, control, and communications architecture; a Logistics Division, to manage contracts and a cost effective computer logistics network; a small public affairs cell to support peace

operations; and a small civilian police cell to plan for police missions. To prevent lengthy delays between mission authorization and deployment, the US urged the UN to create a rapidly deployable headquarters team, maintain a database of potentially available forces or capabilities, establish a trained civilian reserve corps, and develop a modest airlift capability. Lastly, the US suggested that the UN create a professional peace operations training program for commanders and other military and civilian personnel. The US stated its intent to support these proposals—on a reimbursable basis—with personnel, funds, and information sharing.[4]

The UN Responds

Many of the US proposals for reforming and improving the UN's capability to manage its peace operations were already implemented by the time PDD 25 was signed. There are three reasons for this, which should not in any way detract from the causal link between US pressure and the resulting UN changes. First, because NSDD 74 formed the basis of what would eventually become PDD 25, the UN was well aware of the US reform agenda. Second, the US Ambassador for Management and Reform, who works in the US Mission to the UN (USUN) in New York, communicates US policy to the UN.[5] Much of the communication between the USUN and the UN is done informally, which allows the Ambassador to convey insights into future US policy. Third, domestic politics and international events conspired to delay the finalization of PDD 25. In particular, the painful losses sustained by US forces operating in Somalia and the subsequent domestic outcry forced a comprehensive re-evaluation of the draft policy statement. So, although the US position was not official until May 1994, the UN had been under great pressure to improve the management of its peace operations since at least 1992.

When PPD 25 was signed, almost all of the US proposals were already in place. DPKO was established in 1992, which brought all of the relevant peacekeeping support elements and the

field missions under centralized control. The surge in new peace operations created a severe manpower shortage, which was remedied in 1993 by inviting member states to provide qualified military personnel to fill vacancies within the DPKO. These individuals—called gratis military officers—were not formal employees of the UN but were on "loan" from various member states.[6] By the end of 1993, the UN had created the following new organizations and functions (the related PDD 25 proposal is in parentheses): Mission Planning Unit (Plans Division), Situation Centre (Information and Research Division), Office of Operations (Operations Division), Field Administration and Logistics Division (Logistics Division), Civilian Police Unit (small civilian police cell), Standby Arrangements System (database of potentially available forces or capabilities), Air Operations and Safety Unit (modest airlift capability), and Training Unit (professional peace operations training program).[7] In 1996, the Rapid Deployment Mobile Headquarters Team concept was instituted (rapidly deployable headquarters team).[8] A small public affairs cell was not created in the DPKO because the UN already had an entire public relations department. A trained civilian reserve corps was also not established. Both of these omissions are insignificant.[9]

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

It is important to note that PDD 25 was based on a critical assumption: that the UN was just like the US. It was expected that the UN's capabilities to manage its peace operations would automatically become more efficient and effective once the PDD 25 reform proposals were implemented. Nothing in the record suggests that there was a discussion as to whether these particular structural and managerial reforms were the most appropriate measures *for the UN.* While a healthy dose of PDD 25-style organizational tweaking might be just the right medicine for a struggling US business or bureaucracy, it was not appropriate for what ailed the UN. As

will be discussed later in this paper, the UN's fundamentally political nature was not fully appreciated when formulating US policy. In addition, PDD 25 never addressed the conceptual gridlock that gripped the UN as it struggled to define the nature and extent of its role in the post-Cold War world. Mirror imaging by the US caused policy makers to misread the UN, which led to a policy and a UN response that resulted in change without reform.

US pressure—officially articulated by PDD 25—provided the impetus for UN reform efforts. For better or for worse, the UN looks basically the way the US wanted it to look. However, the UN still has not significantly improved its capabilities to mange peace operations. Before assessing why this is the case, it is necessary to first describe the shortcomings that have persisted despite the US-induced changes.

Notes

[1] Robert McClure and Morton Orlov II, "Is the UN Peacekeeping Role in Eclipse?" *Parameters* XXIX, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 96; supplemented by information found on-line at http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions.

[2] Ivo H. Daalder, "Knowing When to Say No: The Development of US Policy for Peacekeeping," in *UN Peacekeeping, American Politics, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, ed. William J. Durch (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 37-39.

[3] Ibid., 39-61.

[4] Department of State, *Clinton Administration Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations (PDD 25)* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of International Organization Affairs, May 1994), 7-9.

[5] The purpose of the US Mission to the UN, which is run by the Department of State, is to maintain a link between the US government and the UN.

[6] By 1995, almost 25% of the more than four hundred positions in the DPKO were filled by gratis military officers from member states (McClure, 99). Gratis military officers were not UN employees. There were also a handful of "seconded" officers, which meant that the UN either paid their salary directly or reimbursed their home country. Seconded officers were UN employees. Currently, there are very few gratis or seconded officers left in DPKO; they were forced to leave the Headquarters as a result of political pressure exerted by the Non-Aligned Movement in 1997-1998.

[7] Kofi A. Annan, "Challenges of the New Peacekeeping," in *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping for the New Century*, eds. Olara A. Otunnu and Michael W. Doyle (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 177-185.

Notes

[8] Marjorie Ann Browne, Ellen Colliern, and Nina M. Serafino, *Peacekeeping Options: Considerations for US Policymakers and Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 10 April 1997), 30.

[9] Although this discussion has been limited to PDD 25-related reforms, the UN initiated many of its own initiatives during this period. See, for example, Ibid., 30-33 and information found on-line at http://www.un.org/reform/.

Part 3

Herding Snakes

I have often compared it [the UN] to a business with 185 members of the board; each from a different culture; each with a different philosophy of management; each with unshakeable confidence in his or her opinions; and each with a brother-in-law who is unemployed.

— Madeleine Albright

While PDD 25 had a noticeable impact on the way the DPKO was structurally organized for peace operations, the management of those operations was not significantly improved. Glaring shortcomings in the UN's ability to plan, conduct, and sustain its missions remained. These deficiencies have adversely impacted the overall effectiveness of UN peace operations. One of the most straightforward ways to assess the UN's effectiveness is to evaluate completed missions against criteria that measure success or failure. Two criteria are often used: how well the operation prevented further violence in its mission area and how well the operation facilitated lasting conflict resolution.[1]

When judged against these criteria, the UN emerges with a decidedly mixed record of success since 1993-1994.[2] There are instances of outright success, such as in Mozambique (ONUMOZ, 1992-1995), where the UN helped implement a peace agreement. Some missions have produced more ambiguous results, such as in Croatia (UNCRO, 1995-1996), where the UN maintained a tentative peace but was unable to prevent the Croats from invading UN-protected areas. Other missions have been unqualified failures, such as in Angola (UNAVEM III, 1995),

where the UN was ineffective in implementing a political settlement and the nation reverted back to war. Finally, there is the case of UN inaction, such as the horrific bloodletting that occurred in 1994 in Africa's Great Lakes Region. Rwanda will forever represent the UN's impotence in the absence of international consensus.[3]

The Devil is in the Details

This mixed record of success is primarily due to the UN's continued inability to effectively and efficiently plan, conduct, and sustain its peace operations. Although there are many deficiencies that could be discussed, only one shortcoming in each of the functional areas of planning, conducting, and sustaining UN operations will be addressed.[4] The first shortcoming is in the area of mission planning—specifically, the excessive delay between mission authorization and troop deployment. Each new mission is prepared in ad hoc manner, as if the UN had no prior peacekeeping experience. Once a situation has been identified that might require UN action, the Secretary-General dispatches a team to assess the feasibility of a mission. If this fact-finding visit recommends UN action and there is political consensus within the Security Council, a new peace operation will be authorized *in principle*. During the period when the Security Council authorizes a new operation in principle and the General Assembly approves its detailed budget, the DPKO contacts potential contributor nations in order to identify those willing to provide troops, equipment, and services.[5] In addition, agreements between the host nation(s) must be reached, contracts for supplies let, and troop contributor arrangements established. This diplomatic dance and bureaucratic wrangling can result in delays of weeks and even months between formal authorization and the arrival of troops and their equipment in the field.[6] The real-world implications are staggering. Lengthy delays mean that the UN is unable to come to grips with a situation before it gets completely out of hand and then requires a larger and more

expensive operation later. For example, Slobodan Milosovic reportedly stated that an international intervention in the early stages of that conflict would have deterred Serb military action against Croatia and Bosnia.[7] Several PDD 25-inspired reforms—the Mission Planning Unit, the Standby Arrangements System, and a Rapid Deployment Mobile Headquarters Team—were specifically aimed at improving the UN's planning capability in order to eliminate lengthy deployment delays.[8] However, these reforms proved insufficient and the problem persists.

The second shortcoming concerns the conduct of ongoing peace operations: the ineffective command and control arrangements in the mission area and between the field and the UN Headquarters. Each mission is headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), who is a civilian appointed by the Secretary-General. Directly under the SRSG are the Force Commander, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Humanitarian Coordinator, the Civilian Police Commissioner, and any other major functional component required for that mission. Each of these individuals is equal in stature and reports directly to the SRSG. Nevertheless, command and control problems are endemic. Tensions arise between the military and political components because they have different goals and different functional chains of command. This can result in a lack of communication and may lead to situations where one hand does not know what the other is doing, as was the case in Somalia.[9] Force Commanders, particularly when confronted with dangerous situations, have also not been afraid to jump the chain of command. In Bosnia, some commanders feared NATO bombing would put their troops at risk and took their concerns directly to the Security Council.[10] There is also the vexing issue of national interference, whereby contingents report to and receive orders from their own militaries. This has resulted in situations where national contingents have refused to follow the Force Commander's orders and even instances where a contingent was abruptly pulled out of the mission area.[11] Finally, the

UN Headquarters does not give its force commanders enough political, administrative, or financial authority. As a strategic-level organization, the UN Headquarters should simply provide resources and oversight to commanders in the field. In reality, the Headquarters is intimately involved with almost all of the operational decisions and many of the key tactical ones as well.[12] The Office of Operations, another PDD 25 proposal, has been unable to untangle and streamline these command and control arrangements. So, the shortcomings persist and continue to undermine the UN's ability to conduct effective peace operations.

The third shortcoming covers the area of force sustainment, and involves the inefficiencies of UN logistics support. UN peace operations rely on a logistics system that is controlled by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) in the field and directed by the Field Administration and Logistics Division (FALD) of the DPKO in the Headquarters.[13] The CAO, who is a civilian, controls the resources the military component needs to do its job. This creates enormous tensions between the Force Commander and the CAO, which often spills back to the UN Headquarters for resolution.[14] However, the major problem with the UN logistics system is rooted in procurement procedures—which stipulate lengthy competition periods, multiple bidding for every item, and purchasing at the lowest price—that FALD uses to purchase supplies. Unbelievably, the UN uses the same procurement system to buy office products for its Headquarters staff as it does to buy supplies for its troops in the field. The cumbersome and sluggish procurement process affects the UN's ability to launch new missions in a timely fashion and sustain existing ones at adequate levels.[15] Moreover, advance logistics planning is almost non-existent: the length of a typical mandate, which is only six months long, limits forward purchasing options.[16] Finally, there is the issue of fraud, waste, and abuse. Some national contingents have a tendency to take with them all of the items they have used in the mission area

once their tour is completed. Other contingents have been known to buy items and services in the mission area with national funds and then file inflated claims with the UN after rotating home.[17] PDD 25 proposed a Logistics Division to efficiently manage contracts and a cost effective computer logistics network; it got neither. FALD was formed by transferring the Field Operations Division from the Department of Administration and Management and then adding to it the functions required for peace operations. In short, FALD was a classic case of you get what you pay for: it is not integrated enough with political and military operations, its procurement procedures are ill-suited to the logistics requirements of peace operations, and it is easily manipulated for personal or national gain. As a result, the UN's force sustainment capability continues to suffer.

Time to Pay the Piper

The UN's persistent inability to improve the management of its peace operations has resulted in a noticeable loss of confidence in the UN within the international community. There are three noteworthy trends that indicate states no longer view UN operations as one of the primary tools to restore or maintain international peace and security. First, the number of new operations has tapered off significantly since the high watermark of UN peacekeeping in the early 1990s. The UN was averaging approximately five new operations per year from 1991 to 1993 and, in 1993, had more than eighty thousand personnel deployed around the world. From 1994 to 1999, the UN has only averaged three new missions per year; in 1999, it had a little more than twelve thousand deployed personnel.[18] Second, many of the recent operations reflect a UN no longer committed to the bedrock principle of maintaining international peace and security writ large. Of the 20 new operations since 1994, most have corresponded to either the interests of the great powers (seven missions in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and three missions in

Haiti) or to areas receiving extensive media coverage (six missions in Africa and the latest mission in East Timor).[19] Third, there has been an increased enthusiasm for "peacekeeping by proxy."[20] Most of the time, this has occurred when the UN authorizes a regional organization or coalition of states to lead an operation.[21] Recent examples include NATO operations in the former Yugoslavia and the combined Australian, New Zealand, US, and British effort in East Timor. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in a tacit admission of his organization's fundamental inadequacies, has even proposed that formal arrangements be established to govern relations between the UN and regional security organizations.[22] Other times, the UN has been bypassed altogether. This recently occurred when NATO began its bombing campaign in Kosovo and Serbia without UN authorization.[23] The ad hoc multinational organization led by the US to stabilize the situation on the Ecuador-Peru border (MOMEP, 1995) is another instance where the UN was circumvented.[24] Taken together, these three trends reflect the UN's diminished stature and role within the international security system.

The UN earns below-average marks for its overall effectiveness, which is directly related to its continued shortcomings in the areas of planning, conducting, and sustaining its peace operations. This consistent under-performance has led to a loss of confidence in the UN's ability to maintain international peace and security. Why has the UN, despite the reforms implemented, been unable to improve the management of its operations? A tentative answer to that question constitutes the main argument of this paper, and is the subject of the next chapter.

Notes

[1] The two criteria are from Paul Diehl of the University of Illinois (William J. Durch, "Keeping the Peace: Politics and Lessons of the 1990s," in *UN Peacekeeping, American Politics, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, ed. William J. Durch (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 15).

[2] Browne, et al., 74-80. Information on all of the completed UN missions can be found on-line at http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions.

Notes

[3] Durch, 15-19. Regarding Rwanda, there are many that blame the US for not supporting a UN mission in the Security Council; a post-Somalia hangover is cited by some as one of the underlying reasons for US reticence.

[4] Other shortcomings include: the lack of timely and secure communication links between the UN Headquarters and the field, the absence of UN doctrine, insufficient attention to force protection, an inability to exploit advances in technology, the inadequate training of units from non-traditional troop-contributing nations (Claus Heje, "United Nations Peacekeeping—An Introduction," in *A Future for Peacekeeping?* ed. Edward Moxon-Browne (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 16), an unreliable system for the gathering, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence (Gareth Evans, *Cooperating for Peace* (Australia: Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1993), 127-128), and an ineffective early warning capability (Norman Bowen, "The Future of United Nations Peacekeeping," *International Journal on World Peace* XIV, no. 2 (June 1997): 9-11).

[5] It is not uncommon that troops will be provided by one country, equipment by another, and airlift by a third.

[6] Brian Urquhart and Francois Heisbourg, "Prospects for a Rapid Response Capability: A Dialogue," in *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping for the New Century*, eds. Olara A. Otunnu and Michael W. Doyle (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 190.

[7] Bowen, 22.

[8] The UN favors the creation of a rapid reaction or rapid deployment capability to help alleviate deployment delays. The US is opposed to such a capability on the grounds it would create a standing UN armed force (Ibid.).

[9] Duffey, 17 and Durch, 18.

[10] Bowen, 20.

[11] On not following orders, see Bowen, 20-21 and on pulling out of the mission, see Durch, 19.

[12] Evans, 127.

[13] Despite its third-tier status on the organizational chart, FALD is the center of power within the DPKO and has enormous influence over the UN's peace operations. The current division chief, Mr. Hocine Medili, is arguably the most powerful individual within DPKO, based on longevity, personality, and the vast resources FALD controls.

[14] Bowen, 21.

[15] Connie Peck, "Summary of Colloquium on New Dimensions of Peacekeeping," in *New Dimensions of Peacekeeping*, ed. Daniel Warner (The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995), 192-193.

[16] Alex Morrison, "UN Peacekeeping Reform: Something Permanent and Stronger," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* III, no.1 (Winter/Spring 1996): 103.

[17] Morrison, 103-4. The author has personally witnessed official claims for weekly $25 haircuts (in the field!) and reports of UN equipment appearing in national military units.

[18] McClure, 96; supplemented by information found on-line at http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/.

[19] Complied from information found on–line at http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/.

[20] The term "peacekeeping by proxy" is from Morrison, 104-6.

[21] Chapter VIII of the UN Charter provides the authority for regional organizations to conduct either peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations.

Notes

[22] Foreign Report, "Saving the UN," *Jane's Information Group Limited*, 16 September 1999, 1. It is worth noting that there are drawbacks associated with regional organizations leading peace operations (see Browne, 7-12, Morrison, 104-6, and Olara A. Otunnu, "The Peace-and-Security Agenda of the United Nations: From a Crossroads into the New Century," in *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping for the New Century*, eds. Olara A. Otunnu and Michael W. Doyle (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 303-304).

[23] Barbara Crossette, "UN Chief Wants Faster Action to Halt Civil Wars and Killings," *The New York Times*, 21 September 1999, A1. With Kosovo, a dangerous precedent was set—a group of states, without the cloak of international legitimacy, intervened in the domestic affairs of another sovereign state. The question then becomes: do we want an imperfect UN deciding when intervention is justified or the strongest state(s)?

[24] John T. Fishel, "War by Other Means?" in *The Savage Wars of Peace*, ed. John T. Fishel (Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 14-15.

Part 4

Danger, Will Robinson!

Nothing in the UN Charter precludes a recognition that there are rights beyond borders.

— Kofi Annan

Many apologists point out that when the UN acts, it is simply reflecting the wishes of member states. While this is an accurate statement, it is then used as an excuse for the UN's shortcomings in the management of its peace operations. Although member states dictate what the UN does and when it does it, they do not control *how* the UN accomplishes what it is asked to do. While the UN may act according to the desires of the international community, it does not follow that the resulting actions—whether good or bad—can also be solely attributed to member states. As a large bureaucracy, the UN is organized the way it sees fit and is governed by its own set of policies and procedures. The three shortcomings previously discussed represent inadequacies of the UN's internal structures and managerial practices, which have persisted despite PDD 25 proposals specifically aimed at ameliorating them. Why is this the case?

Politics as Usual

There are two reasons why the UN has been unable to improve it operational capabilities. First, the UN is a political organization—deliberative in nature. It was not designed for efficiency.[1] The UN was designed, however, to maximize consensus so that the imprimatur of

international legitimacy would be assigned to its actions. Because the UN represents almost all nations of the world, it is besieged by competing demands, perspectives, and biases. In fact, UN actions are governed as much by the needs of the situation at hand as they are by national politics, international relations, world opinion, and the various personalities involved. As a result, the fundamentally political nature of the UN affects almost every decision made relating to the management of its peace operations.

Perhaps the best way to understand the pervasive impact of politics on the UN's operations is to look at mandates in greater detail. The Security Council writes the mission's mandate, which is the most important document in any peace operation. It identifies the legal basis for action, states the objectives of the mission, and stipulates the major tasks to be performed. Many times, mandates are superficially written and left deliberately vague. While this allows for future diplomatic maneuvering, it negatively impacts operational effectiveness. Conflicting interpretations of the mandate often lead to disagreements among the SRSG, Force Commander, and troop-contributing countries, which can paralyze the mission. Some mandates also fail to fully consider the complexity of the situation they are designed to address, and can lead to mission creep.[2] In the current era of second generation peacekeeping, where UN forces are deployed into dangerous situations and asked to perform many different functions, a poorly written mandate spells almost certain disaster. For example, the ambivalence and ambiguity of the mandate seriously undermined the UN's management of its operation in Bosnia.[3] Other times, for political reasons, some mandates contain a mixture of peacekeeping and peace enforcement tasks. Peace enforcement requires different force structures, command and control arrangements, logistics, and rules of engagement than peacekeeping. These mixed mandates create confusion over the rules of engagement, cause the wrong types of forces to be deployed,

and imperil the lives of UN personnel. Somalia is just one instance where lightly armed UN troops, much to their dismay, found themselves in situations with inappropriate rules of engagement and inadequate firepower.[4] The fundamentally political nature of the UN causes it to regularly produce poorly written mandates that are both responsible for and tend to exacerbate the UN's shortcomings in the areas of mission planning, command and control arrangements, and force sustainment. This helps explains why adding resources, rearranging boxes on an organizational chart, or instituting new policies and procedures only resulted in marginal gains in the UN's effectiveness in managing its peace operations.

Conceptual Gridlock

The second reason why the UN has been unable to improve the capability to manage its peace operations is because the organization has not conceptually reoriented itself to the current nature of the international system. The UN was basically envisioned as a tool to maintain peace between states; in other words, to prevent interstate war.[5] However, emerging trends and new realities in global politics have changed the international security environment. One of these trends is the proliferation of intrastate violence, with its attendant political, economic, military, humanitarian, and environmental crises.

Unfortunately, the UN finds itself without the conceptual toolkit to operate effectively in this new environment. Because the UN was founded on the principle of respect for national sovereignty, it is hamstrung when contemplating interventions in intrastate conflicts with less than full consent of the parties involved. The UN Charter barely mentions internal conflict except to discourage intervention in "matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state."[6] In addition, Article 39, which grants the Security Council the authority to "determine the existence of any threat to the peace…and decide what measures shall

be taken" is actually referring to threats to *international* peace.[7] Undaunted, the UN enthusiastically tackled the complex emergencies created by intrastate violence; since 1988, the vast majority of its operations have been multi-dimensional undertakings aimed at resolving internal conflicts.[8]

In the process of adjusting to this changed international security environment, UN operations evolved from first generation peacekeeping to second and third generation peacekeeping. However, as the nature of UN operations changed, their conceptual underpinning did not. The old paradigm of first generation peacekeeping, with its emphasis on gaining full consent of all the parties in conflict, strict neutrality, and the non-use of force except in self-defense, was carried forward. The UN's mixed record of success in the post-Cold War era and its continued shortcomings are largely due to the growing pains associated with the unthinking application of the concepts from traditional peacekeeping missions to wider and assertive-type operations.[9] In other words, the UN has tried to fit second and third generation peace operations into the box of first generation peacekeeping.

As the UN struggled to meet the challenges of the post-Cold War security environment, various solutions were proposed. Some argued that a new paradigm was needed, one that takes a more expansive view of consent, trades neutrality for impartiality to the mandate, and endorses the concept of an appropriate use of force. They believe the UN has demonstrated proficiency with many types of second generation peacekeeping and insist the right structures and procedures are now in place to handle these complex emergencies. Moreover, they view the UN as the least bad international option for so-called "gray zone" peacekeeping—situations that fall somewhere between highly consensual second-generation missions and full-blown enforcement operations. These advocates are pushing for the creation of new UN capabilities, such as

intelligence gathering and analysis, to handle these gray-area operations.[10] Others asserted that the UN should return to the small box of traditional peacekeeping. They believe the UN should stick with what it does best—which is first generation peacekeeping and simple second generation operations. Many wider- and assertive-type operations, including peacekeeping in the gray zone, frequently place the UN and its field personnel in untenable situations.[11] They maintain that the UN cannot adequately handle the contingencies inherent in these missions, such as peacekeepers being taken hostage, violations of a no-fly zone, attacks on safe areas or the peacekeepers themselves, and blocking the delivery of humanitarian supplies.[12] The bitter experiences of Angola, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia are used to justify their concerns.

Against this backdrop, a sort of conceptual gridlock has set in. The UN and its member states cannot agree on *when* and *how* to intervene in semi- or non-consensual internal conflicts. So far, a clear and consistent answer to these important questions has not emerged.[13] In those circumstances where all of the parties in a conflict do not consent to international intervention, the UN is typically torn between two of its core principles: respecting national sovereignty and protecting human rights.[14] If the Security Council reaches an agreement to intervene, then additional dilemmas arise over operational principles such as neutrality, impartiality, and the use of force. The lack of an overarching intervention strategy causes the UN to stumble from crisis to crisis, unable to coherently justify an intervention in one trouble spot while others are left unattended. It is also hinders the development of doctrine for managing its peace operations, which negatively affects the areas of mission planning, command and control structures, and force sustainment. Without sound strategy and doctrine, UN has been unable to improve the management of its operations.

Notes

[1] This should not be a difficult concept for US readers to grasp. For example, the US Constitution was also designed specifically with inefficiency in mind; the Framers argued that a less effective government would infringe the least on individual liberties.

[2] Peck, 180 and Duffey, 16-17.

[3] Bowen, 11. Richard Holbrooke leveled this charge against the UN in 1996.

[4] Durch, 18.

[5] United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations and the International Court of Justice* (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, October 1997), 5-7.

[6] United Nations, 7.

[7] United Nations, 27. See, also, Agostinho Zacarias, *The United Nations and International Peacekeeping* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 153. Article 39 has been loosely interpreted by the Security Council to permit intervention in intrastate conflicts on the grounds that the violence might engulf neighboring states or regional security might be jeopardized (Edward Mortimer, "Under What Circumstances Should the UN Intervene in a 'Domestic' Crisis?" in *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping for the New Century*, eds. Olara A. Otunnu and Michael W. Doyle (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 138-139).

[8] Duffey, 11-12.

[9] Stephen John Stedman, "The New Interventionists," in *International Security and Military Studies Coursebook* I, (Academic Year 2000): 383 and Adam Roberts, "Communal Conflict as a Challenge to International Organization: The Case of the Former Yugoslavia," in *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping for the New Century*, eds. Olara A. Otunnu and Michael W. Doyle (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 32-33.

[10] Perhaps the most persuasive argument for this school of thought can be found in Annan, 171-172.

[11] An impassioned plea that captures this perspective can be found in James H. Allan, *Peacekeeping* (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 148.

[12] The list of contingencies is from Otunnu, 306.

[13] Although the UN did create a Weinberger Doctrine-like set of criteria to use when considering new missions, it failed to address these fundamental questions (the criteria can be found in Browne, et al., 30).

[14] Stanley Hoffmann, "Principles in the Balkans, but Not in East Timor?" *The New York Times*, 11 September 1999, A11.

Part 5

As Good As It Gets

The strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.

— Thucydides

This critique of the UN's management of its peace operations has been intended to make one simple point: the UN is not particularly well equipped to play a leading role in the international security system. It is, however, a useful tool that states can use to advance their individual and collective interests. As a Realist might argue, states have primacy in matters of international peace and security, not international institutions like the UN.[1]

Throughout most of the UN's history, overshadowed by the superpower struggle, states' interests governed responses to issues of international peace and security. The collective security mechanisms called for in Chapter VII of the UN Charter, armed forces on-call to the Security Council and a Military Staff Committee, were never activated.[2] Korea and the Gulf War, perhaps the best examples of collective action under the aegis of the UN, were in essence US military operations. For a brief period after the end of the Cold War, with the rise of second and third generation peacekeeping, it appeared the UN might be able to assume a larger role in the global security system. Although the UN was willing, its failures in the former Yugoslavia and Africa thoroughly disabused many member states that it was capable of dealing effectively with threats to international peace and security. The UN overextended itself by intervening in

situations it was unprepared for and with a system of quasi-military operations to which it was maladapted. As a result, prospective missions are now more closely scrutinized in the Security Council, regional organizations have been granted the authority to act on the UN's behalf, and international interventions have occurred without UN authorization. To use a business analogy, the UN is losing market share and subcontracting out at the same time. This is not necessarily a bad development. As it currently stands, the UN's management of its peace operations is just about as effective and efficient as can be expected. Certainly there are adjustments and improvements that might be made at the margins, but overall, the UN's political nature and conceptual gridlock inhibit further progress.

In For a Dime, In For A Dollar

Before discussing recommendations for US policy makers, it is useful to state the two assumptions upon which they are based. First, the US must exercise leadership within the international system. As a superpower, it has a responsibility to address—preferably using multilateral forums but via unilaterally action when necessary—threats to international peace and security. US leadership is a vital precondition for the successful resolution of many intra- and interstate conflicts. However, there is still considerable resistance to US leadership. Many developing nations, as well as certain Security Council members, cling to the notion of a more expansive UN as counterweight to US power. This political reality must be taken into consideration when formulating US policy. Second, the US must also remain engaged with the UN. Rejecting the UN and the other multilateral institutions that constitute the global security system is not rational. Given the nature of the current international system and limited US military resources, the US is well served by remaining engaged with the UN and other non-state

actors. From a strictly monetary viewpoint, multilateral action allows the US to leverage 75 cents for every dollar it spends on UN peace operations.[3]

The Way Ahead

Based on these assumptions, it is possible to make several general recommendations. First, the US must force the UN to focus solely on what it does best: first generation and highly consensual second generation peacekeeping. Second generation missions that mix peacekeeping and peace enforcement tasks and assertive peacekeeping must be left to other, more capable, actors. Regional organizations, coalitions of the willing and able, or individual states—deputized by the UN—are much better suited. The UN is neither structurally organized nor conceptually oriented to perform well in these types of operations. Quite simply, the UN cannot conduct combat operations: it has inadequate command and control structures, possesses no independent intelligence capacity, and lacks a combat logistics system.[4] The US must use its veto in the Security Council to nix any prospective mission that would involve the UN in Chapter VII (i.e., peace enforcement) tasks.

Second, the US must strengthen other institutions and actors for peace enforcement roles. Regional organizations, such as NATO and the Organization of African States, should be considered viable candidates to plan and manage peace enforcement operations when the Security Council determines that a more robust force is needed to resolve intra- or interstate conflict. Moreover, regional powers can be recruited to lead and participate in these missions. Granted, some regional organizations and states are better equipped and trained, at this time, to conduct peace enforcement operations than others. To enhance worldwide capacities, the US should invite more non-traditional allies to participate in the various peacekeeping-related training exercises conducted by US Unified Commands.[5]

Third, the US must reorient its current policies on multilateral peace operations. PDD 25 ought to be revised. Although the criteria for deciding when and how to support UN operations should be retained, the specific reform proposals are no longer needed. To encourage further improvements, new recommendations should be developed that more comprehensively address the UN's capability to effectively manage its peace operations. Based on past experience, a laundry list of structural and managerial reforms is probably not the best approach. The US must put forward proposals that fully take into account the UN's political nature. Importantly, US policy must help the UN break free of its conceptual gridlock by defining the parameters of what constitutes appropriate UN action. Presidential Decision Directive 56, as the mechanism for managing the interagency process that supports multilateral peace operations, might have to be adjusted as well.[6]

Wrapping Up

This paper addressed the UN's capability to effectively manage its peace operations. It began by comparing the reform proposals of PDD 25 to the actual reforms made by the UN. The UN implemented almost all of the US recommendations. However, its record of success, measured by how well it prevented further violence and facilitated conflict resolution, was decided mixed. This poor record was due to continued shortcomings in the areas of mission planning, command and control arrangements, and force sustainment. Two reasons explain why, despite implementing the PDD 25 proposals, the UN's management of its peace operations remained so ineffective and inefficient. The UN's fundamentally political nature and an on-going conceptual gridlock have conspired to make real reform and lasting change difficult to achieve. These findings imply that the UN's operational capabilities as effective and efficient as practicable. The world community must acknowledge this reality and not expect the UN to play

a leading role in the international security system. States, particularly great powers like the US, have primacy in the arena of global politics. Finally, some general recommendations for US policy makers were suggested.

The paper has been highly critical of the UN's management of its peace operations, and for good reason. When the UN deploys troops to maintain or restore peace, it places them in harm's way. In exchange for making its citizens available for UN service, a member state has a reasonable expectation that the lives of its soldiers will not be unnecessarily jeopardized. So far, the UN has been unable to live up to its end of this very basic bargain.

Notes

[1] For a more detailed explanation of Realist thought, see Barry B. Hughes, *Continuity and Change in World Politics*, 3rd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1997), 46-53.

[2] United Nations, 28-31.

[3] The entire issue of US payments to the UN is complex and surrounded by controversy. The US is obligated to pay approximately 31% of the UN's peacekeeping budget; it has stated it will pay no more than 25% (Department of State, 6). However, for the past 6 years, the US has withheld these funds as one way to encourage UN reform. The most recent US appropriations bill earmarked monies to pay for US arrearages to the UN, subject to certain provisions. In addition, the US also pays for 25% of the regular UN operating budget; it wants that figure decreased to 20%.

[4] James P. Terry, "UN Peacekeeping and Military Reality," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* III, no.1 (Winter/Spring 1996): 135-136.

[5] Enhancing other nations' capabilities was recommended by James A. Schear, "Peacekeeping: DoD Strategy, Policy, and Initiatives," *Briefing to UN Military Advisors Conference on Peacekeeping*, US National Defense University, Washington, D.C., 13 May 1999.

[6] Suggestions for improving PDD 56 can be found in Douglas E. Lute, "*Improving National Capacity to Respond to Complex Emergencies*" (New York: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, April 1998), 31-33.

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