

International security management and the United Nations

Introduction

The United Nations' role in global security: Peace builder or peace enforcer?

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Organization and background of the “UN21” project

The papers in this volume were presented at a symposium hosted by the United Nations University in Tokyo on 8 and 9 November 1996. They represent an instalment of a multi-year project launched by the United Nations University in 1995, the purpose of which is to stimulate thinking about the United Nations in the twenty-first century. In 1996 we addressed the theme of “Peace and Security” for discussion and analysis. The assignment was to consider some of the following questions.

In the twenty-first century, what conditions will be necessary to build and maintain peace? Can the United Nations act as an effective mediator? Why do some peace-keeping operations succeed, and others fail? Should the United Nations adopt a traditional approach to peace-making, or a more comprehensive strategy incorporating conflict management, peace-keeping, and conflict prevention?

Our presumption is that the international system is in a state of flux, and that the United Nations must adapt both institutionally and philosophically to a new, as yet amorphous global order.

The current structure, roles, and functions of the United Nations reflect the international system that emerged at the end of the Second World War. This system initially gave great prominence to the United Nations. One power, the United States, was dominant in the immediate post-war period, and it used the United Nations as its proxy to uphold economic

development and freedom from aggression as the twin rights of states. The United Nations was seen as a bulwark against fascism and protector of an ever-growing number of weak, post-colonial states.

With the rise of Soviet power, however, initial hopes for the United Nations as an institution of global governance gave way to the schisms and ideological confrontation of the Cold War. The strategic interests of the superpowers superseded the altruism of the original mandate. Development assistance became a tool of ideological propaganda, while the defence of territorial rights became a pretext for proxy wars and elaborate balancing games.

The end of the Cold War in 1989–1990 was greeted with euphoria around the world, not least by the United Nations Organization. In theory at least, it presents the United Nations with an opportunity to return to its original mandates to deliver economic growth and security, both universally acknowledged as public goods. But how to get from here to there? There are no road maps.

The organizing principle behind this multi-year “UN21” project is to view the international system from the perspective of five major “actors” in world affairs. We formed core research groups to look at global issues from each of these perspectives – nation states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), market forces, regional institutions, and international organizations.

Our choice of “actors” is necessarily a loose one, and reflects a free reading of Immanuel Kant’s 1795 masterpiece, *On Perpetual Peace*. Kant argued that representative democracy, economic interdependence, and international law were forces that underpinned peace among nations, by eliminating reasons for conflict. In Kant’s day as in our own, states are the dominant actors in the international system. But new types of institutions have developed global presence. They range from 24-hour computer-driven financial markets to NGOs which provide basic human services on the battlefronts of collapsing states. Their impact on the international system is of growing importance. Our five “actors” are merely the most prominent of the institutions whose global role has been reinforced by the end of the Cold War.

Each year of the project, the core groups are taking up a different theme. In 1995, the first year of the project, we tackled overarching themes relating to each of the major actors and how they might evolve in the twenty-first century. In 1996, the core groups concentrated on issues of peace and security.

As part of our task in 1996, we had to sort through an emerging new vocabulary in the realm of peace and security. The 1990s have provided a huge new body of experience. We now have to distinguish between a spectrum of military and quasi-military activities on the part of the

United Nations and other international or transnational organizations whose primary mission is preserving peace and stability. At one end of the spectrum is the 1991 Gulf War, sanctioned by the UN Security Council and fought by a multinational alliance assembled by the United States of America. At the other end are measures that fall under the category of preventive diplomacy – peace-keeping, peace-making, peace building.

Somewhere in between are the roles of active mediation in a crisis. As with our choice of actors, our use of these terms is necessarily loose. Many of the attempted mediations, preventive efforts, and applications of force are unprecedented, and may be difficult to repeat for a variety of reasons – the Gulf War is an example. We view the present exercise as more descriptive than normative or prescriptive, although our ultimate goal is to arrive at recommendations for reforming the United Nations.

The UN21 project was conceived as a tribute to the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations on 26 June 1945. Our idea was to put together academics, practitioners, and experts from within the United Nations system. We wanted to combine theoretical and empirical approaches to problems. By associating the five core research groups with five international “actors,” we hoped to look at issues through different prisms, and to capture aspects of issues that are ordinarily invisible when seen from a single perspective. In a sense, each of our core research teams became advocates for their entities within the international system, seeking ways in which each “actor” could more effectively shape events to our desired outcomes – global development and peace.

Reaffirming the UN’s central role in global conflict management

No other issue on the UN’s reform agenda has received so much attention as the need to play new roles in peace and security. No other issue brings the United Nations so much back to its roots.

Global peace and security are among the UN’s core missions. At its founding in 1945, hopes were high that the United Nations could serve as a global high command to keep the peace in a post-colonial, post-fascist world. The end of the Cold War has similarly lifted expectations. With the closing of the ideological gap between East and West many look to the peace-keeping apparatus of the United Nations as the best tool to deal with the lesser crises that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Implicit to the arguments in this volume is a belief that the United Nations has a pre-eminent role to play in global peace and security. The end of the Cold War has made the United Nations an ever more impor-

tant partner and player in the varied tasks of conflict resolution and conflict avoidance. Yet, much as within the United Nations community itself, there is little agreement on other basics – among them, how the United Nations can best perform its peace-keeping and peace-making roles.

Everybody involved in the UN21 project agreed that the United Nations should not serve as a tool, or proxy, for national interests. We agreed as well that the UN's role as an actor in security matters would increase while its value as a political arena might decline. It was also clear that few thought the United Nations should step back from active involvement in global security, in the manner of a “global council” of wise men and women providing advice from the sidelines.

Our disputes were over issues relating to the management of global peace and security, not the mission. The arguments were about the specific job description of the United Nations as a service provider in the field of security. Who are its clients? What services should it delegate? What services fall squarely within the UN mandate? And, most importantly, what services might cross the line between intervention in the name of humanity and intervention for the sake of power projection?

This volume offers critiques from a variety of perspectives of the way the United Nations has managed its security roles in the immediate post-Cold War period. Some see threatening trends in the strengthening of the powers of the UN Security Council since the Gulf War; most agree that the Security Council has limits to its effectiveness as a global policeman.

Others are highly optimistic about the possibilities for the United Nations to play an ever-larger role in conflict prevention – an exceedingly broad concept which spans development assistance, counselling on the processes of democratization, political risk analysis to provide “early warning” of hot spots, and other forms of institutional support. This view of the United Nations as peacemaker, however, assumes that the mass of NGOs, regional councils, and member country governments can cope with internal and external conflict in a selfless, objective and coherent manner. Such an assumption runs counter to much of human history.

Thus, if there is a pattern to the differences among the UN21 researchers, it centres on two formal constructs of the United Nations as security provider: one as peace enforcer, one as peacemaker. In terms of the real world, it is highly unlikely that the United Nations will play either role in a pure form. Reality must lie somewhere in between. Yet, for the sake of clarifying ideas, it is useful to imagine these two poles as book-ends, as the outer parameters of two potential lines of evolution.

Both models, or both extremes, assume a change in the nature of states and national sovereignty. The United Nations as peace enforcer would have authority to intervene directly in certain types of conflict without the consent of the warring states or factions. As peace builder, the United Nations would play a supporting role, perhaps providing legitimacy to the

conflict mediation and enforcement activities of a myriad of regional organizations, NGOs, and humanitarian relief bodies.

Should the United Nations be seen as global policeman or global peace consultant? The first image became familiar after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, when the United Nations became the vehicle for sanctions and finally a full-scale military campaign against Iraq. During the heady period from the victorious end of the Gulf War in March 1991 to the collapse of the UN mission in Somalia in October 1993, the United Nations launched 14 peace-keeping missions – almost as many as in the previous 46 years. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the United Nations and other organizations broke new ground in dispensing with the rights of national sovereignty in the name of arms control. According to Brahma Chellaney of the Centre for Policy Research, the UN Special Commission on Disarmament of Iraq was intrusive “to a degree unprecedented in the history of arms control.”

The notion of the United Nations as peace consultant stems from former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 “Agenda for Peace.” The Agenda argues that the UN mission in security encompasses a range of services beyond military intervention – preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peace enforcement, and post-conflict peace building. Under this concept, organizations which were once at the fringe of the peace business will move to the centre. The United Nations becomes a provider of services on demand. Its “clients” range from NGOs specializing in development and humanitarian relief to regional entities that may in turn promote economic development, monitor elections, or send military forces into conflict zones in the name of regional stability.

One of the least predictable outcomes of the end of the Cold War has been a deepening of schisms within the UN membership between developing countries of the “South” and advanced industrial nations of the “North.” This may be due in part to the release of pent-up passions suppressed during the period of East–West confrontation.

With the end of the Cold War, developing countries feared that funds for economic assistance would shrink along with the strategic motivations behind aid. In this anxiety, the countries of the South have largely been correct. Less comprehensible is their reaction to the thinking behind Boutros-Ghali's Agenda for Peace. Connie Peck, of the UN Institute for Training and Research, writes that the Agenda for Peace – which essentially has gone nowhere – was caught in the crossfire between UN hawks and UN doves. UN hawks were highly sceptical of the concept of preventive diplomacy, which they felt would blunt and dissipate the energies of the Security Council.

UN doves, on the other hand, were critical of the Boutros-Ghali proposals for the opposite reason. According to Peck, the doves, mainly countries of the South, saw “preventive diplomacy” as yet another excuse

for great power domination and intervention. Peck writes, “Concern grew that preventive diplomacy could become the thin end of another neo-colonialist wedge.”

The end of the Cold War was a time of inflated expectations. The American political scientist Francis Fukuyama predicted the “end of history.” The world was to unite under the twin banners of capitalism and democracy. The “borderless” global economy would eliminate most reasons for conflict. The state would take second place to a host of new transnational organizations, large and small – multinational corporations, regional economic associations, and citizens groups to oversee new standards of environmental conduct, human rights, and other global “public goods.”

Perhaps the least surprising of our findings on peace and security is that the historical nation-state is by no means ready to give up the ghost. Any future roles of the United Nations, as policeman, consultant, or bystander, will have to deal with the fact that statehood remains a given condition of the international order. Strong states, such as the United States, will seek to use the United Nations as a tool and limit its autonomy as an actor. Weak states may be unable to prevent infractions of their sovereignty in conflict situations.

It goes without saying that intervention, if it is to succeed, must be timely and effective. Intervention after states have failed – as in the case of Somalia and Rwanda – is far less desirable than mediation in advance of a collapse. Painful and frustrating though the UN intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been, it has at least been successful in preserving the shell of Bosnia and Herzegovina left over after the aggressions. The most durable future role of the United Nations as a security organization is likely to be that of an arena – a focus of efforts to negotiate differences between nations, mediate conflicts, and arrive at agreed-upon strategies to bring conflicts to an end. But it also has a significant, if disputed, role as a tool to enforce international regimes of weapons control and environmental protection, among others. And it has a significant role as a direct actor, particularly in second-generation peace-keeping operations, as in Cambodia or El Salvador, and the ongoing campaigns in Guatemala, Slovenia, and Angola.

Perspectives on the UN’s role in peace and security

On states and sovereignty

Has the end of the Cold War brought about the end of the nation-state? Has it kindled new types of conflict? These two questions occupied the research group on states and sovereignty.

We habitually define international conflicts as conflicts between states. Conflicts between or among states frequently involve an infringement of sovereignty, in terms that are universally understood.

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990, there was no question that the situation was one nation-state invading, and thus violating the territorial rights of, another. Over the ensuing months the United States was able to develop a moral consensus against Iraq, culminating in the launching of the Gulf War in January 1991. Most nations agreed that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was not a good thing. In the end, there was little opposition to the US-led campaign or the way the United States conducted itself over the three weeks of war.

But what happens when ethnic rivalries, or competition over resources, or differences of religion, erupt in conflicts that spill across borders? Such conflicts create "international" problems of a different order. And what happens when a civil war or ethnic feud leads to humanitarian tragedies on a scale to provoke international concern? When refugees escaping a conflict become a problem for their neighbours? If the objective is to mediate conflict, with whom does one mediate? Who's in charge? The state? Tribal leaders?

The security environment of the 1990s has begun to challenge some of our basic premises about states and sovereignty. On the one hand, there are more and more weak or failed states which are increasingly a source of global instability. The end of the Cold War has seen a sharp rise in domestic tumult. The list of collapsed states includes Somalia and Liberia; according to Charles Aiodun Alao of King's College, London, there are at least 20 more states that could collapse soon.

Another risk to the international system comes from the lopsided power imbalance in favour of the United States – which is the uncontested strongest of the strong states. According to Sherle Schwenniger, the United States has shown an inclination to block the "emergence of other arrangements for order-keeping that are less dependent on American military power." This has resulted in an ad hoc approach to conflict management, writes Schwenniger. The international system has charged some states huge penalties for their sins, such as Iraq, while leaving others in the lurch, such as Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Rwanda.

Much of the instability in the international system since the Gulf War has come from fragile states newly bereft of their Cold War patrons. At the same time the United States, self-acknowledged to be the last remaining global superpower, has shown a strong tendency to retreat into its traditional isolationist shell. Thus, weak states have come to dominate the foreground of international events. Our four researchers offer varying perspectives on this disturbing shift, together with several policy recommendations.

Two of our analysts, Georg Sørensen and Charles Abiodun Alao, con-

centrate on the problems of weak states. Sørensen argues that the Westphalian concept of the state is in the process of breaking down, and in the process exposing the irrationality of borders drawn around post-colonial states with little or no sense of national identity. He blames the international donor agencies for perpetuating a sense of “secure insecurity” among these states, and their leadership élites for an exaggerated attachment to juridical borders.

Sørensen recommends that policy makers seek to engage civil society more deeply in their activities because of the erosion of the state’s authority.

Africa is the subject of Charles Abiodun Alao’s analysis of the “failed state.” Alao disagrees with Sørensen on most points, including the factors that have traditionally been cited as the causes of African instability – the shallow historical bonds of states forged in recent independence movements, the structural problems of inherited colonial economies, and the recent rise of “ethno-nationalism.”

Instead, Alao argues that contemporary policy decisions by the advanced industrial countries were directly responsible for the “wave” of failed states in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, he blames the new regime of “accountability” that replaced Cold War patronage and the structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. These created political and economic stresses that have driven fragile states to the brink of destruction – 20 states, to be precise. In Alao’s book, “ethno-nationalism” gets off easy; it is a symptom, not a cause, of the pressure these nations face.

Alao has little good to say about the UN’s efforts in Africa, recalling United Nations officials in Liberia who became known for their fondness for “driving expensive vehicles around the capital.” If there is one policy thread in common between Alao and Sørensen, it is that the solution to Africa’s problems must be a local one. Alao’s policy recommendations are explicit. He states also that the international system should favour a three-part strategy of reducing or cancelling African debt burdens; supporting democratic movements in Africa and ostracizing authoritarian regimes; and establishing an African mediation committee consisting of elder statesmen to tackle “brewing conflicts.” This last is an approach that has been tried with some success, as Margaret Vogt points out in her paper for the research group on regional organizations.

Sherle Schwenninger and Amin Saikal tackle the future of strong states in the international system. Both argue, from different perspectives, that strong states will continue to be a dominating feature of the international system, blocking the trend in the direction of “post-modern” states, to use Sørensen’s term for countries with advanced networks of economic, social and political connections linking them to regional and international systems.

In Saikal's interesting analysis of five emerging "strong" states, such states show little inclination to abandon their "statist myths" in favour of either the Kantian model or the sort of world envisioned by Samuel Huntington, in which states are less meaningful than "civilizations." In terms of the security theme, Saikal's analysis leads to the conclusion that strong states get stronger because they employ self-correcting mechanisms to avoid conflict, a characteristic which also strengthens the international system. He writes: "It is clear that the nation-state is set to underwrite the structure and define the operation of the international system beyond this century." As to policy makers, Saikal implies that they, too, will have to settle for a world in which the United Nations serves neither as manager nor counsellor, but as something in between.

Schwenninger's point is almost the opposite. He argues that the post-Cold War dominance of the United States is wrecking a system that would otherwise converge along Kantian lines. In fact, he paints the United States as a major source of global instability. This is firstly because of its opposition to multilateral security arrangements which might dilute US military authority. This opposition, Schwenninger writes, has led to a pattern of ad hoc conflict response, and reinforced a long-term trend towards regional fragmentation of the international system along Huntingtonian lines.

Secondly, Schwenninger blames the United States for setting a "bad example" by withholding funds for "international public goods." The retrenchment of US bilateral aid, and cutbacks and arrears on its payments to international organizations (especially the United Nations) have all undermined regimes of conflict prevention which underpin a Kantian approach to international security.

What can be done? Obviously, as far as Schwenninger is concerned, the United States must grow up, by accepting its responsibilities as a partner among equals in multilateral security organizations, and it must make good on its financial obligations to the international community. Schwenninger argues that part of a maturation process on the part of the United States will be meeting its financial obligations to the United Nations and other international organizations. In effect, Schwenninger envisages a system in which the United States remains the principal donor to international organizations, yet relinquishes its instinct to dominate and acquiesces to a benign multilateralism.

Clearly, the central question for UN reform in the area of states and sovereignty will be how to deal with fragile and failed states; the underlying message of all the analysts in this research group is that strong states can take care of themselves. How are we to nurture links between the international system and civil society in weak states, without arousing fear, resentment, and perhaps retaliation against the very groups we seek to support? How do we cope with self-absorbed yet fragile regimes com-

mitted to survival through military means? We must give more thought to what Saikal calls the persistence of the “statist myth.” Any wide-ranging UN reform will have to reflect the fact that weak states, rather than strong ones, pose the greatest risk of conflict.

On global citizenship

One of the least predictable outcomes of the end of the Cold War has been to strengthen enormously the role of civil society in conflict management. The Gulf War was, from this as from so many other perspectives, a watershed event. In 1991 the UN Security Council passed a resolution authorizing humanitarian relief organizations to cross into northern Iraq without the consent of the government. This meant that, for the first time, the United Nations upheld the rights of victims over the rights of their governments. But it also underscored the new and important role civil society has acquired in conflict management and peace building.

Not even the International Committee of the Red Cross had been able to disregard national borders in its long operational history. The end of the Cold War may have marked the beginning of an era in which global civil society generates its own mechanisms for crisis response, conflict reconstruction, and conflict prevention, without waiting for decisions at the level of states and international organizations.

Nice idea – but how will it work? Our second core research group, on civil society, examined the ever-growing role of “transnational civil society actors” from four perspectives. How effectively have transnational social movement organizations influenced global public policy on peace and security? Can NGOs move beyond conflict response to the more complex business of peace building? Can transnational civil society actors build a sense of common purpose by establishing networks of international peace-keeping organizations and training institutes? Finally, are the same forces behind the growing importance of civil society “actors” and the rapid expansion of global criminal organizations?

In an overview of the team’s work, Volker Rittberger of the University of Tubingen wryly notes that the features most NGOs – including criminal societies – have in common are ones which sharply limit their efficacy. They are constantly preoccupied with a competition for funds; any impulse towards cooperation is undercut by differences on strategies and fears of domination; and their normal operating platform is states in conditions of war or civil collapse. The first two characteristics are shared by practically all movements and service organizations; the last is unique to the subset of organizations which operate in war zones and fragile or failed states.

Paradoxically, these shortcomings of NGOs are all too evident even in

the two areas of global conflict management where they have had the most profound influence: in the anti-nuclear movement, and in post-Cold War humanitarian relief work.

The anti-nuclear movement, as chronicled by Jackie Smith of the University of Notre Dame, inspired some of the best and brightest minds of the post-war period. Launched just three months after the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, over a 40-year period the movement most certainly created a highly visible lobby in favour of nuclear disarmament.

Smith writes that the movement profoundly changed the cost-benefit calculations of the nuclear superpowers – they had to take into account the numbers of influential scientists who demanded total disarmament. It also forced a certain level of transparency and accountability upon nuclear arms negotiations, because an informed public demanded information. Finally, the scientists did everything they could to channel information on the horrific consequences of nuclear war to both the public and the negotiators.

Yet in essence the anti-nuclear movement, represented by such groups as the Parliamentarians for Global Action, the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, and the Soviet-controlled World Peace Council, never managed to reach a consensus on goals, and thus never had a decisive influence on multilateral disarmament talks. Their influence was at the fringes, in the public atmosphere in which talks were conducted by the superpowers, and in nuances of the debate rather than in its substance. The clear implication is that transnational civil society must learn more about goal formulation, consensus building, and strategic management of issues before it can be an effective influence on international security policy.

Service organizations have a different problem – graduating from conflict reaction to conflict prevention. Roland Koch, of the Technical University of Munich, offers a close analysis of the increasing autonomy of humanitarian relief organizations. Until the early 1990s, NGOs were on their own as far as the international community was concerned. They had to negotiate their way into conflict situations, and often continue negotiations with hostile parties in order to stay. They were frequently accused of partisan leanings. If they got in the line of fire, there was no way out.

The orphan status of humanitarian relief NGOs changed with the end of the Cold War for a simple reason: conflicts themselves became too widespread, complex, and muddled for governments and the larger international institutions to handle all the problems. At the same time, Koch argues, governments began to cut back on development assistance and step up funding for humanitarian relief. The result was an expanded role for NGOs, and a greater recognition of the services they performed.

Chronologically, the shift began in 1990, with the granting of observer status in the UN General Assembly to the International Committee of the Red Cross. It culminated with the 1994 Oslo Declaration on Partnership in Action, which sanctioned cross-border relief operations without the consent of governments. In between, in northern Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Somalia, NGOs were increasingly thrust to the front lines of conflicts, pursuing a newly activist agenda.

Koch describes this phenomenon as part of a “complex international governance” that has emerged since the end of the Cold War. Nonetheless, both Koch and Rittberger point to a central weakness of NGOs in conflict management. As Rittberger writes, they are “not yet capable of taking effective action to prevent humanitarian emergencies.” Koch notes that many of these organizations have an institutional aversion to establishing or accepting leadership structures, which naturally weakens their impact on policy.

What are some of the potential roles of civil society in conflict management? Alex Morrison and Stephanie Blair, of the recently established Lester B. Pearson International Peacekeeping Training Centre, present the concept of “peace-keeping by proxy,” in which informal networks of peace-keepers may assume some of the functions traditionally managed by governments and the United Nations. Such networks might be composed of peace-keeping training centres in different countries, together with individuals or organizations focusing on some aspect of conflict management or prevention.

Finally, Phil Williams of the University of Pittsburgh speculates that global criminal organizations have been given a boost by the end of the Cold War, for some of the same reasons that NGOs have become more prominent in international affairs. The breakdown of states has meant that existing organizations cannot cope with the myriad situations that arise; this has created an opening for criminal networks that Williams describes as only very loosely organized. The Cold War also served as an incubator for some of these organizations, he argues. Western governments were supportive of anti-communist political parties with criminal links, particularly in Italy and Japan. But the real story is the rise of the Russian mafia, which has taken advantage of economic and military reforms to amass enormous power.

The core group’s analysis leaves us with a number of questions for further study. Should the United Nations create a special registry for NGOs specializing in conflict management? Such a registry was set up for development NGOs at the Rio Earth Conference in 1992. Clearly, the United Nations should be working more closely with civil society actors on a range of issues. But how much cooperation is feasible, given the enormous diversity of NGO agendas and leadership, or anti-leadership

styles? Where should NGOs concentrate their efforts in conflict management – on prevention or response? How can the United Nations support the work of NGOs in conflict situations without losing control of its own conflict management agenda?

On regional arrangements

One of the striking outcomes of the end of the Cold War is the growing prominence of regional organizations in mediating disputes and peace-keeping. Even more striking is the increasing importance of subregional organizations, which have been increasingly assertive and effective in conflicts in Africa and Latin America over the last decade. It is clear that the United Nations will be delegating more rather than less peace-keeping work to such organizations.

Unlike NGOs, regional organizations have specific mandates in the field of security. They have the recognition and cooperation of their member states, and usually that of the international community. Their track records are well known, and if there are severe differences between member countries they generally do not survive. Nonetheless, these organizations have their limits, and our third core research group set out to explore them.

What do we mean by “regional organizations”? Muthiah Alagappa of the East-West Center supplies a definition that is both unconventional and precise. A regional organization, or “regionalism,” consists of cooperation among three or more governments or NGOs (with the emphasis on governments); the members must be in geographical proximity, and focus on one or more issues that represent common concerns; and they must have some motive for cooperation. In his overview paper synthesizing the work of the group, he argues that there are two main limitations faced by regional organizations.

First, the principle of non-intervention prevents members of a regional organization from active intervention in the domestic affairs of any other member. Regional organizations generally play a role in organizing dialogue; they can constrain but not actually restrain combatants from the use of force.

Second, Alagappa argues, regional organizations seem to have no ability to mobilize effectively against an external threat. There is “no sense of community at this level,” he writes, and a hostile outside state may react with even greater hostility when faced with the perceived threat of a regional bloc. Even if the reaction is not hostile, it may yet be distant; Alagappa cites the examples of US opposition to nuclear-free zone proposals by the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the South Pacific Forum. “It viewed the proposals ... as undermining its

global strategy while working to the advantage of its rival, the Soviet Union.”

How can such deficiencies be addressed in the context of UN reform? Alagappa's policy recommendations are, again, simple and practical. He urges against replacing the existing loose arrangements between the United Nations and regional organizations with any precise set of guidelines. Instead, he argues that there should be a clear division of labour between the Security Council and regional institutions; he defines this as a system whereby the Security Council should retain “control” and delegate “everything else.” At the same time, regional organizations must remain “accountable” to the Security Council, but this must not lead to “micro-management” on the part of the Council.

The difficulty of generalizing about regional organizations is shown by three empirical studies of regional security organizations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Each case represents many of the same elements, in terms of an increasing interest in peace-keeping and some highly successful instances of mediation. Even so, the reasons for involvement in peace-keeping, as well as the success of interventions, are quite different.

The African study, by Margaret Vogt of the International Peace Academy, is perhaps the clearest example of the inhibiting effect of the non-intervention principle. Although the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has established a peace-keeping operations fund and begun to hold meetings of defence officials, there is still no consensus among member states about the propriety of intervention by the organization; many member states prefer UN peace-keeping because they see it as more impartial than the OAU.

Largely because of such contradictions, the OAU's track record in peace-keeping is anything but even. There is as yet no command structure for peace-keeping. In the Rwanda conflict in 1994, when the United Nations refused to intervene, the OAU decided to go in – but arrived five months late with its troops. In the aftermath of the Rwanda debacle, the United Nations learned enough to encourage the OAU and other regional organizations to develop programmes for the selection, preparation, and training of peace-keeping forces.

Vogt argues that the OAU's most effective interventions have been when it has assigned elder statesmen to mediate disputes in the Democratic People's Republic of the Congo and Burundi, while efforts at more comprehensive peace-keeping have stumbled. She recommends that the OAU concentrate on coordinating subregional efforts at peace-keeping, while the larger regional organization handle doctrine and training.

Asia's security organizations illustrate Muthiah Alagappa's second point remarkably well – the difficulty that regional organizations have in

dealing with an outside threat. Shiro Harada and Akihiko Tanaka, of the University of Tokyo, present a cogent history and analysis of security organizations in Asia, particularly the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN has two great problems – China and the United States. Any aggressive intervention by ASEAN in regional conflicts would be likely to raise concerns in both Washington and Beijing.

As a result, ASEAN and the related ASEAN Regional Forum have never engaged in peace-keeping or any other form of domestic or international interventions. However, ASEAN has played a highly effective role as mediator in resolving the Cambodian conflict in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Harada and Tanaka point out that confidence building and preventive diplomacy are all well and good, but the true test will come if the region experiences a serious instance of conflict or domestic violence beyond the regular suppression of political dissidents that characterizes some ASEAN member countries.

ASEAN's greatest contribution, according to Alagappa, is that it has altered the normative context of South-East Asia. This change has considerably enhanced the chances for political survival of some member states, he argues. ASEAN has also increased the collective diplomatic weight of South-East Asian states.

Latin America represents yet another variation on the theme. Cristina Eguizábal of the Ford Foundation argues that regional organizations in Latin America have become effective precisely because Latin Americans were united in wanting an alternative to US solutions and overwhelming US influence. They started with strategies of using informal mechanisms to reduce conflict; after the Cold War, these informal mechanisms flowed into a "very dense web" of regional organizations.

As in Africa, Eguizábal finds that subregional groupings have been more effective than larger and more highly politicized organizations such as the Organization of American States. The Contadora process was less effective than the Equipulas grouping in ending the Nicaraguan quagmire because Equipulas was more "local" to the conflict, Eguizábal argues.

Where does this leave us in terms of UN reform? Questions for further study might include some or all of the following. As Alagappa observes, no single set of guidelines fits all cases. Nonetheless, can the United Nations do more to prepare regional organizations, or subregional organizations, for peace-keeping roles? Should regional organizations maintain their own standing forces of peacekeepers trained in UN methods? Would it be useful to develop international networks of regional organizations for peace-keeping? International training standards? Conventions on humanitarian intervention to which all regional organizations might agree?

On international organizations

In the euphoric period immediately after the end of the Cold War, the UN Security Council and other international security organizations seemed to experience a great rush of confidence.

The Security Council, free of internal bickering among members of the Permanent Five for practically the first time in its history, launched 14 peace-keeping operations between 1991 and 1993, compared to 17 in the previous 46 years. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) introduced “challenge inspections” in 1992, which basically ignored the sovereignty of states suspected of harbouring nuclear weapons production. When the IAEA tried out its first “challenge inspection” in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the ensuing confrontation nearly led to war on the Korean Peninsula. The UN Special Commission on Disarmament of Iraq, established in 1991, amounted to a virtual occupying force in Baghdad.

Logically, such expansion of the powers of international organizations would be a necessary stage in the evolution of global governance. Yet not a single member of our research group on international organizations found anything particularly positive in these developments. Rather, the central question for the team on international organizations became how best to limit and define these powers. It appears that none of our analysts believes that the United Nations, or other international organizations, should attempt the role of peace enforcer – instead, the analysts emphasized such roles as training, coordinating, and delegation of peace-keeping tasks to regional organizations.

Thomas Weiss, of Brown University, urges that the United Nations should attend to “seven lessons” in peace-keeping in order to gain public consent. First, he says, in order to be effective there should be “no compromise on security” in peace-keeping operations. Second, the United Nations should emphasize prevention. Third, it should use regional organizations. Fourth, it should control the humanitarian impulse. Fifth, it should avoid enforcement. Sixth, it should provide “multifunctional services.” Finally, it should make better use of NGOs.

The three empirical studies are no less adamant about restraining the powers of the United Nations and other international security organizations. Of the three, Brahma Chellaney is the most indignant about the increasingly autonomous behaviour of some international organizations, particularly the IAEA. He claims that arms control is being used to support the global status quo, and urges that the IAEA should rediscover its mandate for technical cooperation and moderate its campaign to strengthen nuclear safeguards.

Frustration is a running theme of Connie Peck’s essay on the lack of

progress within the United Nations on setting up an apparatus for conflict prevention or early warning, despite the blessing of the 1992 Agenda for Peace. The reason why so little has happened is a curious study in post-Cold War politics within the UN membership. We have already noted Peck's analysis of the politics of "preventive diplomacy." A related effort to set up an early warning office to detect conflicts before they happen has foundered administratively; so tight is the budget that some political officers have never even visited the countries they are supposed to cover.

David Malone's essay on the post-Cold War evolution of the UN Security Council contains some of this volume's most sensible suggestions on UN peace-keeping. He reminds us that political will and resources must be present before the decision is made to use force, and that objectives and strategy must be clearly related before launching peace-keeping operations. Malone believes that, after the sobering experiences of the mid-1990s, the Security Council is far more likely to work through member countries rather than using peace-keeping to enforce its will.

"The Security Council today is a cautious body, heavily weighed down by financial constraints," Malone writes. But, he adds, "We should not turn our backs on the United Nations because it has stumbled on occasion, sometimes spectacularly."

This last comment sums up the mood of the research group on international organizations. Contrary to expectations in the late 1980s, nobody wants the United Nations as global policeman. Yet nobody thinks it should sit on the sidelines of conflict, either. Further study is necessary to define a more effective way for the United Nations to involve itself in peace-keeping. Rather than policeman or consultant, a better metaphor might be that of orchestra conductor or air traffic controller, managing a complex system without actually playing the instruments or flying the planes. The United Nations succeeds best in peace-keeping where it delegates, as in Haiti. But there are exceptions to this rule, when the United Nations has succeeded in "playing the instruments" itself, with the full consent of the states and populations involved, as in Cambodia, El Salvador, and Mozambique.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the role of the United Nations in peace and security is among its most important missions. That role has evolved substantially since the end of the Cold War, and will continue to change and grow, most likely in ways that we cannot predict at present. The title of this introduction posed a question – should the United Nations focus on

building peace, or enforcing it? Based on our research, we argue that the United Nations should be delegating both roles as much as possible – to regional organizations, subregional organizations, and in some cases NGOs.

This is not just a matter of finances. Obviously, in its current financial straits, the United Nations does not have the resources to maintain a global standing army for peace-keeping. It relies on US and European powers to launch major peace-keeping initiatives, and is frequently made a mockery of.

However, our analysts have demonstrated that money problems are not the only reason for the United Nations to look at formulas for broader delegation of peace-keeping roles and tasks. Organizations closer to the scene of conflict have a vested interest in restoring stability; they also are frequently more sensitive to local cultural nuances than international organizations, including the United Nations.

Since the 1992 Agenda for Peace, the UN membership and bureaucracy has paid more attention to the variety of tasks associated with stabilizing fragile countries to prevent conflict, and reconstructing countries torn apart by conflict. Yet “preventive diplomacy” and “conflict reconstruction” are also tasks that take enormous time, patience, and local knowledge. Local organizations, NGOs, and international development and humanitarian organizations are far more likely to be effective than the United Nations.

There are many more questions for study and research. Perhaps new understandings need to be reached on the circumstances and conditions that justify certain limited infringements of national sovereignty. Perhaps we need an international code on the rights of victims. We definitely need to study more carefully ways and means of working with NGOs, while clearly recognizing their limits.

One of the most promising areas for delegation of authority is between the United Nations and regional organizations. We should be looking for new ways to prepare regional organizations for peace-keeping and other conflict management roles. We need to pay more attention to the destabilizing impact of market forces upon certain weak countries, and seek the means to strengthen their financial and market institutions prior to imposing the harsher forms of conditionality and structural adjustment.