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World Peacekeeping

Do Nation-States Have a "Responsibility to Protect?"

Lee Michael Katz

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A Polish soldier from the European Union Force supporting the U.N. mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo participates in training for hostage-rescue operations at the EUFOR base in Kinshasa. A French helicopter hovers above.

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As the United Nations marked Holocaust Commemoration Day this year, the world's failure to stop the deaths and devastation in Darfur made the occasion far more urgent than the usual calendar exercise.

New Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had to deliver his remarks on videotape, pointedly noting he was on his way to Ethiopia for an African Union summit focusing on ending the carnage against black Africans in western Sudan. Just weeks after taking office, the head of the world body said he was strongly committed to this message: "We must apply the lessons of the Holocaust to today's world."[1]

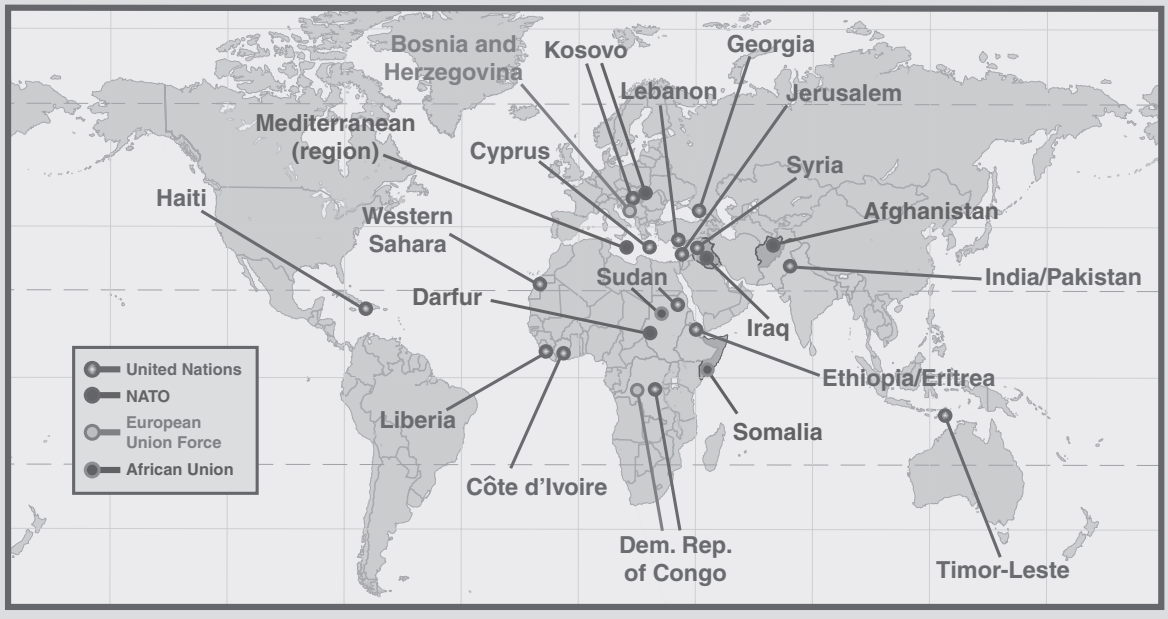
Elderly Holocaust survivors in the audience served as visible witnesses before delegates of the international body that rose out of the ashes of World War II's Nazi evils. But it was clear that more than 60 years later, the lessons had not been fully learned.

"I still weep today" at the memories of those, including her father and brother, who were marched to the gas chambers at Auschwitz, said Simone Veil, a well-known French Holocaust survivor.

But she also pointed to slaughter that happened decades afterward and is still happening today. While those who survived hoped the pledge "Never Again" would ring true, Veil said, sadly their warnings were in vain. "After the massacres in Cambodia, it is Africa that is paying the highest price in genocidal terms," she said, in a call for action to stop the killings in Darfur. An estimated 200,000 have been killed, countless women raped and 2 million made homeless as armed Arab militia known as janjaweed prey on vulnerable villagers.

Major Worldwide Peacekeeping Operations

The African Union, European Union Force, NATO and United Nations combine for 24 peacekeeping forces deployed around the world. The U.N. has 15 missions, with the most recent deployment being a police force in Timor-Leste in 2006.



Sources: African Union, Delegation of the European Commission to the USA, NATO, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

The laments about a lack of lifesaving action continue despite the fact that the United Nations has endorsed, at least in principle, a new concept to keeping the peace in the 21st century called the Responsibility to Protect. At its heart is the fundamental notion that the world has a moral obligation to intervene against genocide.

This includes using military force if necessary, even when the deaths are taking place inside a sovereign nation as in the 1994 ethnic massacre in Rwanda. A reduced U.N. force in the African nation did not physically try to stop the slaughter by Hutus in Rwanda of 800,000 fellow Rwandans — mainly Tutsis but also moderate Hutus — in a matter of weeks. Traditionally, such intervention would be seen as off-limits inside a functioning state, especially a member of the United Nations.

So the notion of the Responsibility to Protect "is very significant because it removes an excuse to turn a blind eye to mass atrocities," says Lee Feinstein, a former U.S. diplomat and author of a 2007 Council on Foreign Relations report on R2P, as the concept is known.[2] Such excuses went "unchallenged" until recently, he says. "If the U.N. is serious about this — and there are questions — this is a big deal." But a decade after Rwanda, the deaths, displacement and widespread rapes in Darfur have been ongoing even after the Responsibility to Protect was endorsed by the U.N. General Assembly in 2005 and in a Security Council resolution a year later.

"Darfur is another Rwanda," said Paul Rusesabagina, whose actions to save 1,268 refugees from genocide were made famous by the movie "Hotel Rwanda."[3] "Many

people are dying every day. The world is still standing by watching," he said. "History keeps repeating itself — and without teaching us a lesson."

Secretary-General Ban must make the Responsibility to Protect his top priority if there is hope to stem mass killings in the future, Feinstein argues. That contradiction between the promise of the Responsibility to Protect and the situation in Darfur is what Ban faces in leading the world body.

Ban has cited Responsibility to Protect as at least one of his priorities, noting its unfulfilled promise. "We must take the first steps to move the Responsibility to Protect from word to deed," Ban declared.[4]

But, like his predecessors, Ban wields only moral authority as the leader of the world body. There is no standing U.N. army to back up his pronouncements. "He doesn't have troops to send," says the Secretary-General's spokeswoman Michele Montas. "What the Secretary-General can do besides an advocacy role is limited."

Though U.N. peacekeeping forces have taken on an increasingly aggressive posture in recent years, the U.N. system of relying on donated troops doesn't offer the speed or military capability for invading a country to force an end to murders. Nor is it likely countries that traditionally contribute troops would rush to put their soldiers in harm's way, notes Jean-Marie Guéhenno, U.N. Undersecretary General in charge of peacekeeping operations. "If they feel they are going to have to shoot their way in, it's no more peacekeeping. Sometimes, it may be necessary," Guéhenno says candidly in an interview, "but it will have to be done by other organizations."

NATO, possibly the African Union (with outside logistical help and equipment) and ad hoc "coalitions of the willing" nations are the likely global candidates for any truly muscular interventions to stop the slaughter of innocents.

But even for U.N. peacekeepers, fast-moving events can foster a combat atmosphere. Today's peacekeeping faces the dangers of unrest or battle from Latin America to Africa.

Such threats have spawned a new term that has taken root in 21st-century U.N. operations: "robust peacekeeping." Modern U.N. forces may have attack helicopters and Special Forces, "the type of military capabilities you would not have traditionally associated with peacekeeping operation, "Guéhenno notes.

Getty Images/Don Emmert

Ban Ki-moon, right, new secretary-general of the United Nations, gets a briefing in January 2007 at the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Kisangani, where he laid a wreath for fallen peacekeepers.

"We're not going to let an armed group unravel a peace agreement that benefits millions of people," he says. The peacekeeping chief sounds more like a general threatening overwhelming force rather than a diplomat cautious of its implications. "So we'll hit hard on those spoilers," he promises. Guéhenno cited Congo as an example, but there are others.

Peacekeeping forces today face rapidly changing situations. In Somalia, Ethiopian troops conducted a successful invasion by New Year's 2007, well before peacekeepers could be deployed to stop the fighting. But attacks continued to rock Mogadishu, the capital, and emergency peacekeeping plans intensified.

In Lebanon last year, the deadly aftermath of Israel-Hezbollah battles brought the need for the U.N. to ramp up a large peacekeeping force extraordinarily quickly.

Guéhenno's U.N. peacekeeping department has its hands full as it is, trying to keep up with worldwide demand for troops, police and civilian advisors. Much like Microsoft dominates the computer world, the United Nations is by far the dominant brand in peacekeeping.

With more than 100,000 troops, police and civilian officials in 18 peace missions around the world, the United Nations has the largest amount of peacekeepers

U.N. Provides Half of Peacekeeping Forces

With 82,751 personnel spread among 15 missions worldwide, the United Nations contributes over 50 percent of the world's peacekeeping forces.

Organization	Personnel	Missions	Nations Contributing Personnel
United Nations	**82,751**	**15**	**114**
NATO	**55,000**	**5**	**37** (includes 11 NATO allies)
African Union	**15,000**	**2**	**10**
European Union Force	**8,500**	**2**	**34** (includes 10 non-EU nations)
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe	**3,500**	**19**	**56**
Multinational Force & Observers	**1,687**	**1**	**11**

Sources: African Union, Delegation of the European Commission to the USA, Multinational Force & Observers, NATO, OSCE, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

deployed since the organization's founding in 1945. That total could exceed 140,000 depending on the strength of any new missions in Somalia and Darfur. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned before he left office: "U.N. peacekeeping is stretched as never before."

Traditionally, impoverished nations are major troop contributors, in part because the payments they receive help them economically. Bangladesh, Pakistan and India each had about 9,000-10,000 troops in U.N. peacekeeping forces in 2006. Jordan, Nepal, Ethiopia, Ghana Uruguay, Nigeria and South Africa were also major troop contributors.[5]

Although peacekeeping advocates argue peacekeeping is a bargain compared to the cost of all-out war, peacekeeping on a global scale does not come cheap. The approved U.N. 2006-2007 budget is more than $5 billion.

Peacekeeping is paid for by a special assessment for U.N. members weighted on national wealth and permanent Security Council member status. The United States pays the largest share of peacekeeping costs: 27 percent (though congressional caps on payment have resulted in lower payments in recent years).[6] Other top contributors include Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, China, Canada, Spain and South Korea.[7]

But peacekeeping operations often are hampered by having to run deeply into the red. In November 2006, peacekeeping arrears totaled $2.2 billion.

U.N. peacekeeping is also hobbled by the built-in logistical problem of having to cobble each mission together after Security Council authorization. Plans for standing U.N. military forces have never gotten off the ground. But U.N. police are starting to take "baby steps," starting with dozens of officers for a permanent force, says senior U.N. police official Antero Lopes.

In recent years, U.N. peacekeeping officials have made inroads to daunting logistical problems by maintaining pre-positioned materiel in staging areas in Italy, notes former New Zealand Ambassador Colin Keating. But there is still a great need for equipment. "You can't just go down to Wal-Mart and buy a bunch of APCS [armored personnel carriers]," he says.

Other regional organizations involved in keeping the peace, with efforts ranging from armed intervention to watching over ballot boxes, include:

- **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):** The military alliance of 26 countries, including the United States, has 75,000 troops worldwide responsible for some of the more muscular interventions, such as the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan, where it has a force of 30,000.
- **African Union (AU):** Established in 2001, the 53-nation coalition has a 7,000-man force in Darfur, including many Rwandans. Another AU contingent of 8,000 has been in Mogadishu since March 6.
- **European Union (EU):** Its troops have taken over Bosnian peacekeeping with a force of 7,000. The EU's broader peacekeeping plans include creation of a long-discussed rapid-reaction force of 60,000. But EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana notes that despite those bold aims, the organization has been depending on a softer "mixture of civilian, military, economic, political and institution-building tools."[8]

- **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):** The 56-member group, working on a non-military level, has more than 3,000 OSCE officers in 19 locations from Albania to Uzbekistan. Their activities are aimed at encouraging political dialogue and supporting post-conflict resolution.[9]
- **Multinational Force and Observers (MFO):** It has about 1,700 troops from the United States and 10 other countries stationed on the Egyptian side of the Israeli-Sinai border.

As an abstract concept, global peacekeeping seems like a reasonable and virtuous response to global problems. Who better than neutral referees to keep fighters apart? Indeed, under the 1948 International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United States and other participating countries are obliged "to prevent and punish" genocide. But forceful military intervention is clouded by questions that range from national sovereignty to international political will along with such practical issues as troop supply and logistics in remote corners of the world.

Increasingly, the Holocaust-related lesson seems to be the notion that the international community has a moral obligation — and indeed a right — to enter sovereign states to stop genocide and other human rights violations.

The Responsibility to Protect concept was detailed in a 2001 report by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), co-chaired by Algerian diplomat Mohamed Sahnoun and former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, now head of the non-governmental International Crisis Group, dedicated to stopping global conflict. "There is a growing recognition that the issue is not the 'right to intervene' of any State, but the 'Responsibility to Protect' of every State," the report said.[10]

By 2006, writes Evans in a forthcoming book, "the phrase 'Responsibility to Protect' was being routinely used, publicly and privately, by policymakers and commentators almost everywhere whenever the question was debated as to what the international community should do when faced with a state committing atrocities against its own people, or standing by allowing others to do so."[11]

More important, he points out, the concept was formally and unanimously adopted by the international community at the U.N. 60th Anniversary World Summit in September 2005. References to the Responsibility to Protect concept have also appeared in Security Council resolutions, including one calling for action in Darfur.

But R2P remains a sensitive concept, and the reference to U.N. military action in the 2005 World Summit document is very carefully couched: "We are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner . . . on a case-by-case basis . . . as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."[12]

As a rule, national sovereignty has been a hallowed concept at the United Nations, and what countries did within their own borders was considered their own business.

"The traditional view of sovereignty, as enabling absolute control of everything internal and demanding immunity from external intervention, was much reinforced by the large increase in U.N. membership during the decolonization era," Evans said at Stanford University on Feb. 7, 2007. "The states that joined were all newly proud of their identity, conscious in many cases of their fragility and generally saw the non-intervention norm as one of their few defenses against threats and pressures from more powerful international actors seeking to promote their own economic and political interests."

Given that history, if nations back up the R2P endorsement at the U.N. with action, it will represent a dramatic shift in policy.

Will the new "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine actually translate into international protection for the people of Darfur? That question has yet to be answered.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the international community's discussion of new powerful action, here are some of the questions being asked about the future of global peacekeeping:

Will the world support the Responsibility to Protect doctrine?

Judging by the inaction in Darfur in the face of highly publicized pleas from groups around world, the R2P is off to an inauspicious start. "Darfur is the first test of the Responsibility to Protect," says Feinstein, "and the world failed the test."

Echoes of the world's continuing failure to protect its citizens from mass murder reverberated off of the green marble podium in the cavernous U.N. General Assembly

AFP/Getty Images/Ramzi Haidar

An African Union peacekeeping soldier stands guard in the village of Kerkera in Darfur, a western province of Sudan, where government-sponsored troops and a militia of Arab horsemen known as "Janjaweed" have been conducting a campaign of devastation against black tribes.

Hall this year. "It is a tragedy that the international community has not been able to stop new horrors in the years since the Holocaust," General Assembly President Sheikha Haya Al Khalifa of Bahrain stated.[13] "This makes it all the more important that we remember the lessons of the past so that we do not make the same mistakes in the future."

Yet the Responsibility to Protect concept faces a number of daunting challenges, from potential Third World opposition to the appetite and physical ability of Western nations to intervene. Allan Rock, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations, who advanced the Responsibility to Protect resolution at the world body, said in 2001 that the doctrine was, "feared by many countries as a Trojan horse for the interveners of the world looking for justification for marching into other countries."[14]

Indeed, commented Hugo Chávez, president of Venezuela and nemesis of the United States, "This is very suspicious. Tomorrow or sometime in the future, someone in Washington will say that the Venezuelan people need to be protected from the tyrant Chávez, who is a threat. They are trying to legalize imperialism within the United Nations, and Venezuela cannot accept that."[15]

In Sudan, the shifting conditions of President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir to allow U.N. troops into Darfur has deterred them as of mid-April 2007.

Like Chávez, al-Bashir has said such a force would be tantamount to an invasion and warned that it could become a fertile ground for Islamic jihadists. Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has already weighed in, urging resistance to any U.N. intervention in Sudan.[16]

And Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, far less of a pariah to the West than before, but still prone to inflammatory statements, told Sudanese officials last November, "Western countries and America are not busying themselves out of sympathy for the Sudanese people or for Africa but for oil and for the return of colonialism to the African continent. Reject any foreign intervention."[17]

With a lineup like that against U.N. deployment, cynics might say, there must be good reason to do so. In Darfur, however, the R2P doctrine has become bogged down by practical considerations: The geographical area to be protected is vast, and both the vulnerable population and predatory attackers are in close proximity.

But, says Chinua Akukwe, a Nigerian physician and former vice chairman of the Global Health Council, "The U.N. and its agencies must now think the unthinkable — how to bypass murderous governments in any part of the world and reach its suffering citizens in a timely fashion."[18]

Nicole Deller, program advisor for the pro-protection group Responsibility to Protect, says the careful wording of the R2P concept document has given pause to many countries. They remember the disastrous day when 18 Americans died in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1993 — memorialized in the book and movie "Black Hawk Down" — that gave both the United Nations and the United States a black eye. "A lot of that is still blowback from Somalia," she says.

But among African nations there appears an evolution of thinking about sovereignty. Ghana's representative to the United Nations, Nana Effah-Aptenteng, confirmed that change when he told a U.N. audience that African states "have an obligation to intervene in the affairs of another state when its people are at risk."[19]

This is further reflected in the AU Constitutive Act, which recognizes the role of African nations to intervene in cases of genocide.[20]

The Sudanese government, whose oil reserves have given them political and commercial leverage in resisting calls for an end to the slaughter, has reacted by changing the subject. When asked about his country facing

possible international military action under The Responsibility to Protect for turning a blind eye to death and destruction in Darfur, Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem, Sudan's U.N. ambassador, instead turns to resentment of the U.S. role in Iraq and Israel's actions in Lebanon last summer. "Why didn't they intervene when people in Iraq were slaughtered and people in Lebanon were bombarded and infrastructure destroyed?" he asks. "Why didn't they intervene there?"

The international community, either at the United Nations or elsewhere, is far from having a standard on when to intervene to stop violence or even genocide. But some attempts have been made to come up with questions that can help arrive at an answer. According to the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, five basic conditions are needed to trigger an intervention by U.N. or other multinational forces:

- **Seriousness of Harm —** Is the threatened harm to state or human security of a kind, and sufficiently clear and serious, to justify the use of military force? In the case of internal threats, does it involve genocide and other large-scale killing, "ethnic cleansing" or serious violations of international humanitarian law?
- **Proper Purpose —** Is the primary purpose of the proposed military action clearly to halt or avert the threat in question, whatever other motives may be in play?
- **Last Resort —** Has every nonmilitary option for meeting the threat in question been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing lesser measures will not succeed?
- **Proportional Means —** Are the scale, duration and intensity of the planned military action the minimum necessary to achieve the objective of protecting human life?
- **Balance of Consequences —** Is there a reasonable chance of the military action being successful . . . with the consequences of action unlikely to be worse than the consequences of inaction?

Certainly Darfur's miseries meet many of the conditions, but not all, Evans says. Questions remain whether all non-military options have been exhausted, and there are "hair-raisingly difficult" logistical concerns to consider as well as high potential for civilian injuries, Evans says.

Thus, the R2P is not necessarily a green light for unfettered military action, according to Feinstein and others. "This is not a question of sending in the Marines or even the blue helmets" of the United Nations, he says, pointing out that the doctrine is most effective in bringing international political pressure to bear before conditions lead to mass killings.

Are regional peacekeepers effective?

While the United Nations leads peacekeeping forces around the world, it does not maintain a standing armed force designed to initiate military interventions. When robust military operations are needed, the U.N. can authorize other actors to respond, such as better-equipped or more willing regional organizations such as NATO, the European Union or the African Union, or a combination of those multinational forces. The R2P doctrine, in fact, specifies that U.N.-authorized military action be done "in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate."

"The U.N. culture is still very much against doing coercive types of operations," says French defense official Catherine Guicherd, on loan to the International Peace Academy in New York, "whereas the NATO culture goes very much in the other direction."

Two current regional operations — the NATO mission in Kosovo and the AU forces in Darfur — reflect the realities of such missions. NATO, working in its European backyard, has been largely effective. The AU, operating in a much larger area with fewer troops and less equipment and support, has been struggling.

At the beginning of 2007, there were 16,000 NATO troops from 36 mostly European nations stationed with the U.N. peacekeeping force in Kosovo, the Albanian-majority Serbian province seeking autonomy from Belgrade. There is a global alphabet of cooperation in Kosovo. The NATO "KFOR" forces coordinate closely with 2,700 personnel of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission — known as UNMIK — which in turn employs another 1,500 men and women from the EU and OSCE.

Two Israeli journalists who reported from Kosovo in 2002 described an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty and called the force of agencies "a massive and complex multinational presence signaling the commitment of the international community to restoring order

When Peacekeepers Prey Instead of Protect

U.N. seeking more women officers

The U.N. has been stung in recent years by reports that male peacekeeping soldiers have preyed on women — often girls under age 18 — in vulnerable populations.

In Congo, U.N. officials admit that a "shockingly large" number of peacekeepers have bought sex from impoverished young girls, including illiterate orphans, for payments ranging from two eggs to $5.

What's more, some peacekeeping missions reportedly covered-up the abuse, as well as the children that have been born as their result. Between January 2004 and November 2006, 319 peacekeeping personnel worldwide were investigated for sexual misconduct, U.N. officials say, with 144 military and 17 police sent home and 18 civilians summarily dismissed.[1]

"I am especially troubled by instances in which United Nations peacekeepers are alleged to have sexually exploited minors and other vulnerable people, and I have enacted a policy of 'zero tolerance' towards such offences that applies to all personnel engaged in United Nations operations," Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in March 2005. He also instituted a mandatory training course for all peacekeeping candidates to address the issues.

"You get [these abuses] not just with peacekeepers but with soldiers in general, and it gets worse the further they are from home and the more destitute the local population," says Richard Reeve, a research fellow at Chatham House, a London-based think tank. "The UN will never get rid of the problem, but they are really dealing with it and putting changes into practice."[2]

Now the U.N. is sending women instead of men on certain U.N. troop and police peacekeeping missions. The first all-female police unit, from India, recently was sent to Liberia, where peacekeepers had been accused of trading food for sex with teenagers.[3] Cases of misconduct by women police are "almost non-existent," says Antero Lopes, a senior U.N. police official.

The head of the new unit, Commander Seema Dhundia, says its primary mission is to support the embryonic Liberia National Police (LNP), but that the presence of female troops will also raise awareness of and respect for women in Liberia, and in peacekeeping. "Seeing women in strong positions, I hope, will reduce the violence against women," she says.[4]

"We plead for nations to give us as many woman police officers as they can," says Lopes. Another advantage of the all-female unit in Liberia is that it is trained in crowd control, Lopes says, shattering a barrier in what had been seen as a male domain. "It is also a message to the local society that women can perform the same jobs as men."

The U.N. is aggressively trying to recruit more female peacekeepers, from civilian managers to foot soldiers to high-ranking officers. "Our predominantly male profile in peacekeeping undermines the credibility of our efforts to lead by example," Jean-Marie Guéhenno, head of the U.N.

and rebuilding civil institutions in this troubled region."[21]

But NATO's toughest deployment has been in Afghanistan, with about 32,000 troops contributing to what is called the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which provides military support for the government of President Hamid Karzai. More than 100 peacekeepers died in Afghanistan in 2006. And 2007 brought more casualties.

"It's very bloody, much worse than NATO ever dreamed," says Edwin Smith, a professor of law and international relations at the University of Southern California and author of *The United Nations in a New World Order.*

"But this is a fundamental test of their ability to engage in peacekeeping and extraterritorial operations outside of their treaty-designated area," Smith continues. "If it turns out that they cannot play this function, then one wonders how do you justify NATO's continued existence?"

In Africa, European troops also may have to fight a psychological battle stemming from the colonial legacy. It is commonly held that many Africans resent non-African peacekeepers coming to enforce order. Perhaps a more pressing reason, observes Victoria K. Holt, a peacekeeping expert at the Stimson Center in Washington, is that a NATO or U.N. force under a powerful mandate "would be better equipped and thus, more effective and a challenge to what is happening on the ground."

peacekeeping department, told the Security Council.

That message was not always heard. A decade ago, peacekeeping consultant Judith Stiehm, a professor of political science at Florida International University, was hired by the U.N. to write a pamphlet on the need for women in peacekeeping. Today she says it was a show effort. "I don't think they even really distributed it," Stiehm says. But pushed by the only female peacekeeping mission head, the issue eventually became U.N. policy.

Security Council Resolution 1325, passed in 2000, "urges the secretary-general" to expand the role of women in field operations, especially among military observers and police.

"The little blue pamphlet and the impetus behind it brought about this very important resolution," Stiehm says, "which is not being implemented, but it's on the books." In fact, "less than 2 percent and 5 percent of our military and police personnel, respectively, are women," Guéhenno told the Security Council.

Beyond the issue of sexual abuse, the role of women soldiers is important in nations where substantial contact between unrelated men and women is prohibited by religion or custom. "Military men just cannot deal with Arab women — that's so culturally taboo," Stiehm notes, but military women can gather information.

Because the United Nations' peacekeeping forces represent more than 100 countries, cultural variations make a big difference in both the prominence of women and what behavior is acceptable, according to Stiehm. "It is very uneven," she says and "dependant very much on who heads the mission."

Bebiche is one of hundreds of internally displaced persons forced to flee warfare in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Countless women and girls there have been brutalized by unprecedented sexual violence, and they have few options for existence but to pursue survival sex.

Stiehm points to Yasushi Akashi, a Japanese U.N. official in the early 1990s. When confronted with charges of sexual abuse of young girls by troops in his Cambodian mission, "Akashi's reaction was, 'Boys will be boys,' " she says.

In another case, Stiehm recalls arguing with her boss over trying to prevent troops from having sex with underage women. "He didn't see anything wrong with it," she says.

The U.N. is now trying to short-circuit the different-cultures argument with a "Duty of Care" code that pointedly states: "These standards apply to all peacekeepers irrespective of local customs or laws, or the customs or laws of your own country."

Moreover, Stiehm says, "Peacekeepers have an obligation to do better."

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[1] "U.N. will enforce 'zero tolerance' policy against sexual abuse, peacekeeping official says." U.N. News Centre, Jan. 5, 2007. www.un.org/apps/news/storyAr.asp?NewsID=21169&Cr=sex&Cr1=abuse&Kw1=SExual+Exploitation&Kw2=&Kw3=

[2] Quoted in Tristan McConnell, "All female unit keeps peace in Liberia," *The Christian Science Monitor online*, March 21, 2005; http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20070321/ts_csm/ofemmeforce_1.

[3] Will Ross, "Liberia gets all-female peacekeeping force," BBC News, Jan. 31, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6316387.stm.

[4] *Ibid.*

The notoriously fickle government of Sudan has indicated it would be willing to accept only a hybrid AU-U.N. force. The U.N. should be limited to a "logistical and backstopping role," Ambassador Abdalhaleem says.

The AU can muster troops, but handling logistics and equipment in a huge and remote area such as Darfur is a major problem for even the best-equipped and trained forces. But the AU began 2007 with only 7,000 troops in Darfur, an area the size of France, and with limited equipment, according to Robert Collins, an Africa expert at the University of California-Santa Barbara, who has visited the war-torn nation over the past 50 years.

"They just don't have the helicopters," he says. "They don't have the big planes to fly in large amounts of supplies. They're just a bunch of guys out there with a couple of rifles trying to hold off a huge insurgency. It doesn't work."

Besides Darfur, the AU has sent peacekeepers to a few other African hotspots, in effect adopting the underpinnings of the Responsibility to Protect by moving to establish its own African Standby Force. Slated to be operational by 2010, the force would have an intelligence unit and a "Continental Early Warning System" to monitor situations that can potentially spark mass killings. The force would be capable of responding to a genocidal situation within two weeks.[22]

Whether such an African force will be able to live up to its optimistic intent poses another big question:

AFP/Getty Images/Ermal Meta

A Swedish peacekeeper checks weapons seized in Kosovo. About 17,000 NATO-led peacekeepers in so-called KFOR missions are responsible for peace and security in the rebellious Albanian-dominated Serbian province. In 1999 NATO forces bombed the area to end ethnic cleansing by the Serbs.

Would it receive continuing outside financial help from the West?

African officials and experts report the biggest problem facing AU peacekeeping is funding, particularly in Sudan. "This is . . . one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the world, yet only five donors seem to be properly engaged," said Haroun Atallah, chief executive of Islamic Relief. "All rich countries must step up their support urgently if the disaster of Darfur isn't to turn into an even worse catastrophe."[23]

Should peace-building replace peacekeeping?

In the past, U.N. peacekeeping focused mainly on keeping warring nations apart while they negotiated a peace pact. Now, U.N. peacekeepers increasingly are being called in as part of complex cooperative efforts by regional military organizations, local military, civilians and police to rebuild failed governments.

Some say the shift is inevitable. More than military might is needed for successful peacekeeping, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer noted last year. During a Security Council meeting to highlight cooperation between the United Nations and regional security organizations, he said he had learned "some important lessons," including the need for each organization to play to its strengths and weaknesses.

"NATO offers unparalleled military experience and capability," Scheffer said, "yet addressing a conflict requires a coordinated and coherent approach from the outset. Clearly defined responsibilities . . . are indispensable if we are to maximize our chances of success."[24]

So is post-conflict follow-through. The United Nations has set up a Peacebuilding Commission to follow up after conflicts have been quelled.

Because peacekeeping now often takes place inside nations rather than between them, the United Nations is typically charged not only with trying to keep the peace but also "with building up the basics of a state," notes Guéhenno. "That's why peacekeeping can never be the full answer. It has to be complemented by a serious peace-building efforts.

"Today, we have a completely different situation" from in the past, Guéhenno explains, referring to the world's growing number of so-called failed states. "You have a number of countries around the world that are challenged by internal divides. They don't have the capacity to maintain law and order."

But peacekeeping consultant Judith Stiehm, a professor of political science at Florida International University, sees a contradiction between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. "That's what gets them in trouble," she says. "You've got guys wearing military uniforms and their missions are very civilian. And once you add the mission of protection, you're not neutral anymore. Some people think of you as the enemy, and it muddies the waters. You can't have it both ways."

CHRONOLOGY

1940s-1950s *Founding of U.N. promises peace in the postwar world. First peacekeeping missions are deployed.*

1945 United Nations is founded at the end of World War II "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

1948 First U.N. mission goes to Jerusalem following Arab-Israeli War.

1949 U.N. observers monitor the struggle over Kashmir following the creation of India and Pakistan.

1950 Security Council approves a U.N. "police action" in Korea.

1956 United Nations Emergency Force is established during the Suez Crisis involving Egypt, Israel, Britain and France.

1960s *Death of U.N. secretary-general in Congo causes U.N. to avoid dangerous missions.*

1960 U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold dies in an unexplained plane crash during a U.N. intervention in Congo by U.N. peacekeepers; the mission fails to bring democracy.

1964 U.N. peacekeepers are sent to keep peace between Greeks and Turks on divided Cyprus; the mission continues.

1970s *Cambodian genocide occurs unhindered.*

1974 U.N. Disengagement Force is sent to the Golan Heights after fighting stops between Israel and Syria.

1975 Dictator Pol Pot kills more than 1 million Cambodians. U.N. and other nations fail to act.

1978 U.N. monitors withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon.

1980s *Cold War barrier to bold U.N. actions begins to crumble.*

1988 U.N. peacekeeping mission monitors ceasefire between Iran and Iraq.

1989 Fall of Berlin Wall symbolizes collapse of Soviet empire and Cold War paralysis blocking U.N. agreement.

1990s *Security Council confronts Iraq. Failures in Bosnia, Somalia, dampen enthusiasm to stop Rwanda killing.*

1990 Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait and defies Security Council demand for withdrawal.

1991 U.N.-authorized and U.S.-led international coalition expels Iraq from Kuwait. . . . U.N. peacekeeping mission is sent to El Salvador.

1992 U.N. Protection Force fails to stop killings in Bosnian civil war.

1993 Ambitious U.N. peace operation fails to restore order in Somalia.

1994 U.N. peacekeepers are unable to stop the massacre of more than 800,000 Rwandans.

1995 U.N. peacekeepers in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica are disarmed and left helpless by Serb forces.

1999 NATO takes military action against Serbia.

2000s-Present *U.N. mounts successful peace-building mission in Liberia.*

2003 U.N. peacekeeping mission in Liberia begins to keep peace.

2005 U.N. General Assembly endorses Responsibility to Protect concept at World Summit.

2006 Security Council endorses Responsibility to Protect but intervention in killings in Darfur region is stalled by Sudan's government.

April 9, 2007 U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon calls for "a global partnership against genocide" and upgrades the post of U.N. Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide — currently held by Juan E. Méndez of Argentina — to a full-time position.

U.N. Police Face Difficult Challenges

Small problems can escalate quickly

In Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor), a country still raw from decades of fighting for independence, Antero Lopes knew that promptly dealing with a stolen chicken was crucial.

As acting police commissioner for the U.N. mission in the tiny East Asian nation in 2006, he discovered that in such a tense environment, overlooking even a petty crime like a marketplace theft could have serious consequences. "Friends and neighbors are brought in, many of them veterans of Timor's bloody struggles, and suddenly you have an inter-community problem with 200 people fighting 200 people," he say from U.N. headquarters in Manhattan, where he is now deputy director of U.N. Police Operations.[1]

United Nations police were sent to the former Portuguese colony last year to restore order in the fledgling state. Timor-Leste gained independence from Indonesia in 2002 following a long struggle, but an outbreak of death and violence that uprooted more than 150,000 people prompted the Timorese government to agree to temporarily turn over police operations to the U.N., which called it "the first ever such arrangement between a sovereign nation and the U.N."[2]

The U.N.'s Timorese role reflects how U.N. police have become "a critical component" of the institution's peace-keeping efforts, notes Victoria K. Holt, a senior associate at The Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington and co-director of its Future of Peace Operations program. The U.N. now recognizes "you just can't go from military to civilian society. You have to have something in between."

A critical role for police wasn't always a given, says Holt, author of *The Impossible Mandate? Military Preparedness, the Responsibility to Protect and Modern Peace Operations.* For much of the United Nations' nearly 60-year peacekeeping history, she says, the lack of a major police role was "one of the biggest gaps. They actually now have a whole police division that didn't exist a number of years ago."

The role and size of the U.N. police effort has grown dramatically in recent years. "Peace operations are increasingly using significant numbers of police to handle security tasks," according to the U.N.'s 2006 Annual Review of Global Peace Operations. Led by the United Nations, the number of police peacekeepers worldwide has tripled since 1998 to about 10,000.

Lopes says that although he is a university-trained police manager with experience ranging from anti-crime to SWAT teams, he is also accustomed to operating in environments without the "same legal framework" one finds in Europe.

He was deployed in Bosnia, for example, while the civil war still raged there in the 1990's. "If you really like these kinds of [policing] challenges," he notes, "you can get addicted."

Roland Paris, an associate professor of political science at Canada's University of Ottawa, sees inherent cultural flaws, including Western colonialism, in peace-building. "Peace-building operations seek to stabilize countries that have recently experienced civil wars," he wrote. "In pursuing this goal, however, international peace-builders have promulgated a particular vision of how states should organize themselves internally, based on the principles of liberal democracy and market-oriented economics.

"By reconstructing war-shattered states in accordance with this vision, peace-builders have effectively 'transmitted' standards of appropriate behavior from the Western-liberal core . . . to the failed states of the periphery. From this perspective, peace-building resembles an updated (and more benign) version of the *mission civilisatrice*, the colonial-era belief that the European imperial powers had a duty to 'civilize' dependent populations and territories."[25]

But despite an ongoing debate, one part of the formula for the near future seems set: The U.N. has increasingly relied on deploying police to help rebuild a society as part of its peacekeeping efforts around the globe. In fact, as "an interim solution," the global U.N. cops have become the actual police force of such nations as East Timor and Haiti and in Kosovo. "We provide a measure of law and order and security that creates the political window to build up a state," Guéhenno says.

U.N. police realize they are operating in a very different environment. "Now we are a significant pillar in helping

Balkan violence may not be over, however. The U.N. mission in Kosovo — the Albanian-majority Serbian province seeking autonomy from Belgrade — is bracing for violence, with the disputed area's future set to be decided this year. Already, news of an impending Kosovo independence plan has triggered violent demonstrations. After U.N. police fired rubber bullets into a crowd of demonstrators in February, killing two people, the U.N. mission there pulled out.[3]

Outside of Kosovo (where the European Union plans to take over police responsibility), the major U.N. police presences are in Haiti and countries in Africa. In Africa, U.N. police missions are hampered by the African Union's lack of proper resources. "In many missions, we find even the lack of simple uniforms," Lopes says, not to mention operable radios, police cars or other basic police equipment.

In Sudan's troubled Darfur, any new police commitment would first focus on "stabilization" of the lawless situation, he says. However, he points out, while U.N. police must not compromise on basic law-enforcement tenets, they still must adapt to local customs in working with local authorities.

Protecting a Fledgling State

Just south of the Equator and north of Australia, Timor-Leste gained independence from Indonesia in 2002. In 2006, U.N. peacekeepers were redeployed to the fledgling state in absence of a local police force.

So Lopes finds it important to play the role of empathetic psychologist as well as tough global cop.

"This is an issue of local ownership," he says. "We must also read what is in their hearts and minds."

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[1] U.N. News Service, December 2006.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] The Associated Press, "Albanians protest UN Kosovo plan," *Taipei Times*, Feb. 12, 2007, p. 6.

the good-governance effort," says Lopes, deputy police advisor in the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations, sounding like a bureaucrat as well as a sheriff.

The Portuguese-born Lopes, who has served as police commissioner for the U.N. mission in East Timor, calls such a heavy U.N. role "a revolution" in the way the United Nations intervenes in internal conflicts. "What we are actually doing is a mixture of peacekeeping and peace-building," he explains. "We are hoping that with good governance — promoting elections and democratized policing — problems will be reduced."

Now, Lopes says, "our role is really to restore the rule of law as opposed to the rule of might."

"It will increasingly be a necessary feature of peace operations," predicts activist Deller. "Just separating factions and establishing elections alone isn't a sustainable model."

But so far, the result in Timor-Leste (the former East Timor) has "been a real disappointment," Deller says. She cites the "re-emergence of conflict," with the U.N. having to come back to try and restore security in the fledgling nation. (*See sidebar, p. 12.*)

Keating, the former New Zealand ambassador to the U.N., believes that without peace-building, "it's very easy to have all these peacekeeping missions out there like Band-Aids," masking deep wounds underneath. He cites the example of "insufficient stickability" in Haiti, where six different U.N. peace operations have sought to hold together the fractured nation since 1995.[26]

U.N. Photo/Daniel Morel

Brazilian blue helmets of the United Nations' peacekeeping force in Haiti help Haitian police keep order in the capital, Port-au-Prince, after a fire that ravaged 50 stores in June 2004.

"You take your eye off the ball, and before you know it you're back where you started," Keating says.

The latest U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti began on June 1, 2004, with the mandate to provide a stable and secure environment, but some Haitian critics say the peacekeepers have behaved more like occupiers.

Alex Diceanu, a scholar at Canada's McMaster University, claims the Haiti operation "has become complicit in the oppression of Haiti's poor majority." For many Haitians, the operation has seemed more like "a foreign occupation force than a United Nations peacekeeping mission," he said. "The few journalists that have reported from these areas describe bustling streets that are quickly deserted as terrified residents hide from passing U.N. tanks."[27]

Armed battles are taking place in Haiti, where U.N. forces have taken casualties as they continue to battle heavily armed gangs for control of Haiti's notorious slums. Exasperated by an infamous warlord's hold on 300,000 people in a Port-au-Prince slum called *Cite Soleil*, U.N. troops took the offensive in February 2007. Almost one-tenth of the 9,000-man Haiti force took the battle to the streets, reclaiming control in a block-by-block battle. Thousand of shots were fired at the peacekeepers.[28]

U.N. troops and police are now willing to battle warlords to try and build a democratic political foundation in the impoverished Caribbean nation, Guéhenno says. "This notion of protection of civilians," he says, "that's a change between yesterday's peacekeeping and today's peacekeeping."

Impoverished Haiti is a tough case, but the United Nations can claim success in building democracy after civil wars in Liberia and Congo, Keating says, where missions are still ongoing. Finding a "sustainable solution" to get people to live together "ain't easy" for the United Nations, he adds. "They can make a huge difference, but it's a commitment involving many years" to rebuild civilian institutions.

Indeed, notes the legendary Sir Brian Urquhart, a former U.N. undersecretary-general and a leading pioneer in the development of international peacekeeping, "The challenges are far weightier than the U.N. peacekeeping system was ever designed for.

"It's a very ambitious thing," he says. "What they're really trying to do is take countries and put them back together again. That's a very difficult thing to do."

BACKGROUND

Late Arrival

The ancient Romans had a description for their effort to pacify their 3-million-square-mile empire: Pax Romana, the Roman Peace. It lasted for more than 200 years, enforced by the Roman legions.[29]

The Hanseatic League in the 13th and 14th centuries arguably was the first forerunner of modern peacekeeping. Without a standing army or police force, the German-based alliance of 100 northern towns stifled warfare, civic strife and crime within its domain, mostly by paying bribes.[30]

For French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, peacekeeping was subordinate to conquest, and the extensive colonial empires of the great powers in the 19th century were more intent on exploiting natural resources than on peacekeeping.

In one rare instance, France, inspired by a romantic age in Europe, sent "peacekeepers" to Greece during the Greek revolt against the Turks in 1831 and ended up in tenuous circumstances between two Greek factions competing to fill the power vacuum.[31]

Perhaps the first example of multinational action against a common threat was in 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion in China, when a 50,000-strong force from Japan, Russia, Britain, France, the United States, German, Italy and Austro-Hungary came to protect the international community in Beijing from the Boxer mobs.[32]

The 20th century, ruptured by two world wars, saw few attempts at peacemaking. In 1919, at the end of World War I — "the war to end all wars" — the international community established the League of Nations to maintain peace. But as World War II approached, the fledgling world body floundered, discredited by its failure to prevent Japanese expansion into China and by Italy's conquest of Ethiopia and Germany's annexation of Austria.[33]

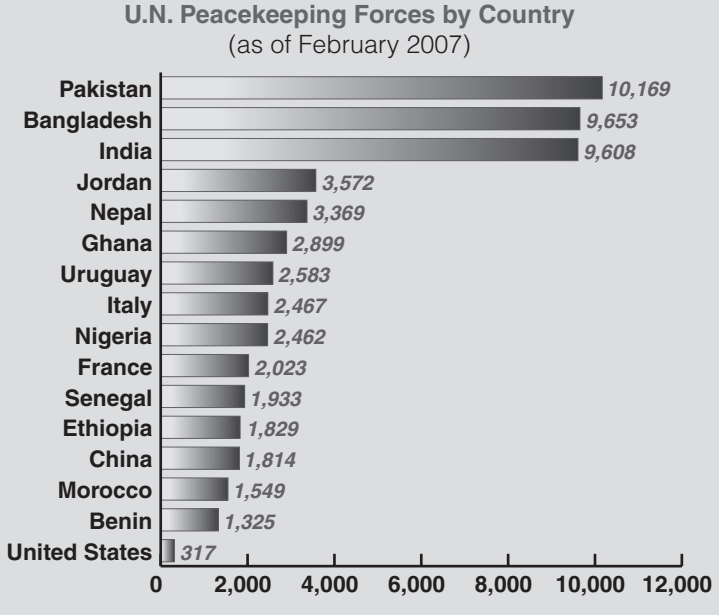
The United Nations was born in 1945 from the rubble of World War II and the ultimate failure of the League of Nations. Britain's Urquhart notes that the U.N.'s most critical task was to prevent doomsday — war between the Soviet Union and the United States. "During the Cold War," he says, "the most important consideration . . . was to prevent regional conflict from triggering an East-West nuclear confrontation."

German Navy Captain Wolfgang Schuchardt joined his once-divided nation's military in the midst of the Cold War, in 1968. "We had a totally different situation then," he recalls. "We had [certain] positions and those were to be defended" against the Soviet Union. Now, priorities have changed and Schuchardt works on strategic planning for the U.N.'s peacekeeping operation in Lebanon, one of the Middle East's most volatile areas.

The United Nations established its first peacekeeping observer operation to monitor the truce that followed the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. Based in Jerusalem, it proved ineffective in the long term, unable to prevent the next three major Arab-Israeli wars.

Developing Countries Provide Most Peacekeepers

Developing nations provide the most manpower to U.N. peacekeeping forces. Pakistan, Bangladesh and India were providing half of the U.N.'s nearly 58,000 personnel in early 2007.



Source: "Ranking of Military and Police Contributions to UN Operations," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations, February 28, 2007

In 1949 the United Nations deployed a peacekeeping observer mission to a similarly tense India and Pakistan, then quarreling over a disputed area of Kashmir.

When communist North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950, the U.N.'s forceful response was unprecedented. The Korean War was actually fought under the U.N. flag, with troops from dozens of nations defending South Korea.

But the war was authorized through a diplomatic fluke. The Soviet Union, which would have vetoed the American-led invasion, was boycotting the Security Council when the vote to take U.N. action in Korea arose.[34]

As a child, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon saw the U.N. in action. "As I was growing up in a war-torn and destitute Korea, the United Nations stood by my people in our darkest hour," he recalled. "For the Korean people of that era, the United Nations flag was a beacon of better days to come."[35]

U.N. Photo/Maher Attar

Sometimes they fight to keep the peace. In Marrakeh, Lebanon, a French soldier of the United Nations' peacekeeping contingent exchanges gunfire with insurgents of the Shiite militia movement, AMAL.

During the Suez Crisis in 1956, the U.N. deployed forces to Egypt, where President Gamal Abdel Nassar had nationalized the Suez Canal, an international waterway that had long been linked to British and French interests. An Israeli invasion and a secretly planned joint French-British air action combined to confront Egypt, then a client state of the Soviet Union. The move brought East-West tensions to a boil.

To cool the situation, Canada's secretary of state for external affairs, Lester Pearson, suggested sending a U.N. Emergency Force to Egypt. The troops had to be rounded up in a week, but their distinctive light-blue berets had not arrived. So Urquhart had surplus army helmets spray-painted. U.N. peacekeepers henceforth would be recognized around the world as "the blue helmets."[36]

Eventually, pressure from the United States forced Britain, France and Israel to withdraw from the canal. Pearson won the Nobel Prize for his efforts.

Congo Quagmire

In the early 1960s U.N. peacekeepers became embroiled in chaos in the fractious, newly created nation of Congo. After gaining independence from Belgium, Congo erupted when strongman Joseph Mobuto seized power, and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was assassinated. The struggle quickly turned into a proxy Cold War battle between the United States and the Soviet Union for influence in the region.[37]

Sweden's Dag Hammarskjold, then the U.N. secretary-general, saw in the Congo crisis "an opportunity for the United Nations to assert itself as the world authority in controlling and resolving major international conflicts," writes Poland's Andrzej Sitkowski. "It was his determination, personal commitment and effort which launched the clumsy ship of the organization full speed into the stormy and uncharted waters of Congo. He knew how to start the big gamble, but could not have known how and where it would end."[38]

While shuttling around Congo, a territory the size of Western Europe, Hammarskjold died in a plane crash that was "never sufficiently explained," Sitkowski continues. "It is a tragedy that his commitment and talents were applied, and, ultimately, laid waste in what he himself called a political bordello with a clutch of foreign madams."

The Congo mission cost the lives of 250 peacekeepers but yielded tepid results. Forty years later, U.N. peacekeepers would be back in the country, now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Other operations have successfully stabilized long-running disputes. In 1964 a U.N. force was deployed to stand between Greece and Turkey over a divided Cyprus. The operation began in 1964, but the island is still divided, and the U.N. force is still present.[39]

During the Cold War stalemate, U.N. peacekeeping had limited goals. As a result, however, it missed the opportunity (some would say moral duty) to stop Cambodian dictator Pol Pot's reign of genocidal terror against his own people. Well more than a million died in Cambodia's "killing fields," where piles of victims' skulls on display to visitors still mark that dark era. Yet the United Nations didn't enter Cambodia until years after the killing ended.[40]

During the 1980s, according to some observers, the United Nations was often stalemated while the Soviet Union and the United States fought over influence at the U.N., and peacekeeping's modest aims reflected the times.

AT ISSUE

Does the world community have a "responsibility to protect"?

YES

Gareth Evans
President, International Crisis Group
Former Co-Chair, International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty

From a speech at Stanford University, Feb. 7, 2007

While the primary responsibility to protect its own people from genocide and other such man-made catastrophes is that of the state itself, when a state fails to meet that responsibility . . . then the responsibility to protect shifts to the international community. . . .

The concept of the "responsibility to protect" [was] formally and unanimously embraced by the whole international community at the U.N. 60th Anniversary World Summit in September 2005 . . . reaffirmed . . . by the Security Council in April 2006, and begun to be incorporated in country-specific resolutions, in particular on Darfur. . . .

But old habits of non-intervention died very hard. Even when situations cried out for some kind of response — and the international community did react through the U.N. — it was too often erratically, incompletely or counter-productively, as in Somalia in 1993, Rwanda in 1994 and Srebrenica in 1995. Then came Kosovo in 1999, when the international community did, in fact, intervene as it probably should have, but did so without the authority of the Security Council. . . .

It is one thing to develop a concept like the responsibility to protect, but quite another to get any policy maker to take any notice of it. . . . We simply cannot be at all confident that the world will respond quickly, effectively and appropriately to new human catastrophes as they arise, as the current case of Darfur is all too unhappily demonstrating. . . .

As always . . . the biggest and hardest piece of unfinished business [is] finding the necessary political will to do anything hard or expensive or politically sensitive or seen as not directly relevant to national interests. . . . We can . . . always justify [the] responsibility to protect . . . on hard-headed, practical, national-interest grounds: States that can't or won't stop internal atrocity crimes are the kind of rogue . . . or failed or failing states that can't or won't stop terrorism, weapons proliferation, drug and people trafficking, the spread of health pandemics and other global risks.

But at the end of the day, the case for responsibility to protect rests simply on our common humanity: the impossibility of ignoring the cries of pain and distress of our fellow human beings. . . . We should be united in our determination to not let that happen, and there is no greater or nobler cause on which any of us could be embarked.

NO

Ambassador Zhenmin Liu
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations

Written for *CQ Global Researcher,* March 2007

The important Security Council Resolution 1674 . . . sets out comprehensive provisions pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict . . . . What is needed now is effective implementation. . . .

First, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law, the responsibility to protect civilians lies primarily with the Governments of the countries concerned. While the international community and other external parties can provide support and assistance . . . they should not infringe upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, nor should they enforce intervention by circumventing the governments of the countries concerned.

Second, it is imperative to make clear differentiation between protection of civilians and provision of humanitarian assistance. Efforts made by humanitarian agencies in the spirit of humanitarianism to provide assistance to the civilians affected by armed conflicts . . . should . . . at all times abide by the principles of impartiality, neutrality, objectivity and independence in order to . . . avoid getting involved in local political disputes or negatively affecting a peace process.

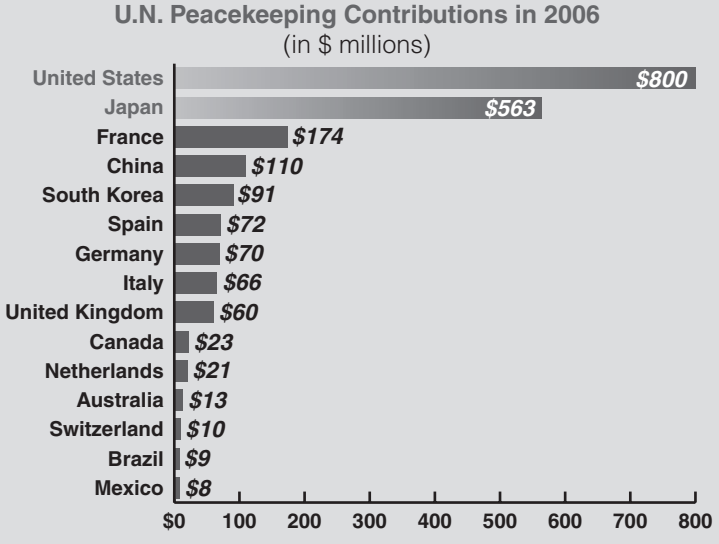
Third, to protect civilians, greater emphasis should be placed on prevention as well as addressing both symptoms and root causes of a conflict. Should the Security Council . . . manage to effectively prevent and resolve various conflicts, it would successfully provide the best protection to the civilians. . . . The best protection for civilians is to provide them with a safe and reliable living environment by actively exploring methods to prevent conflicts and effectively redressing the occurring conflicts.

While discussing the issue of protection of civilians in armed conflict, the concept of "responsibility to protect" should continue to be approached with caution by the Security Council. The World Summit Outcome last year gave an extensive and very cautious representation of "the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity." . . . Since many member States have expressed their concern and misgivings in this regard, we believe, it is, therefore, not appropriate to expand, willfully interpret or even abuse this concept. . . .

Finally, we hope that . . . full consideration will be taken of the specific characteristics and circumstances of each conflict so as to adopt appropriate measures with a view to effectively achieving the objective of protecting civilians.This ensures that in the future, no matter how much moral authority the U.S. loses, its wagon is hitched firmly to the stars of these ascendant nations — and vice versa.

U.S., Japan Pay Most U.N. Peacekeeping Costs

The United States and Japan account for nearly two-thirds of the funds contributed by industrial nations to support the various peacekeeping missions at the United Nations. The U.S. share alone is about 38 percent of the total.



Source: "2006 Status of Contributions to the Regular Budget, International Tribunals, Peacekeeping Operations and Capital Master Plan," United Nations

"I don't think it was ever designed for victory," Urquhart says. "The peacekeeping business was designed to freeze a potentially very dangerous situation until you got around to negotiating. It was quite successful in that."

Failed Missions

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 heralded the end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as an extraordinarily promising start for U.N. action.

In 1991, the Security Council authorized the Persian Gulf War coalition that dislodged Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Though it wasn't fought under a U.N. flag, as in Korea, the first Gulf War demonstrated the U.N.'s clear exercise of military action over words.

Saddam Hussein's 1991 invasion of Kuwait was an unprovoked action by a sovereign nation against another, and clearly prohibited by the U.N. charter. "I always tell my students," notes international law Professor Smith, "that Saddam was the one guy on Earth dumb enough to do precisely the thing the United Nations was established to prevent."

Heady from that success, U.N. member states sought to transform the new post-Cold War cooperation into a dramatic expansion of United Nations peacekeeping. But its efforts were met by mixed results, and well-known bloody failures in the 1990s when it tried to intervene in critical situations in Africa and Bosnia.

In Somalia, on Africa's eastern horn, ultimately failed peacekeeping efforts led to the rise of warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid and the deaths of 18 U.S. soldiers in the infamous First Battle of Mogadishu. The book and film, "Black Hawk Down," told how a U.S. helicopter was shot down and the bodies of American soldiers were dragged through the streets. The battle left 700 Somalis dead along with a Malaysian and two Pakistanis.[41] Somalia would end up lapsing in lawlessness, and the psychological ramifications of the Somalia debacle still haunt the specter of tough peacekeeping operations.

The 1994 Rwandan genocide occurred in central Africa, far from the power centers and concerns of Western aid agencies. The international community, the Clinton administration and the United Nations were all slow to respond, and ineffectual when they did. Canada led U.N. peacekeeping troops in Rwanda, but the reduced force was not authorized or likely able to intervene to prevent the killings.

Former Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, who headed U.N. peacekeeping forces during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, has written the best-selling *Shake Hands with the Devil* in which he criticizes the U.N.'s approach to the conflict. "I have been taking the position from the start that the United Nations is nothing but the front man in this failure," Dallaire states in a BBC interview. "The true culprits are the sovereign states that influence the Security Council, that influence other nations into participating or not."[42]

Bosnia was also a symbol of peacekeeping helplessness. U.N. peacekeepers carved out what they called "safe havens"

to protect civilians against the euphemistically called practice of "ethnic cleansing." "Unfortunately, that only created an illusion of safety in an area where there wasn't safety at all," says former New Zealand Ambassador Keating. "That's because there wasn't sufficient personnel."

International expert Smith argues the U.N.'s Bosnia effort was doomed from the start. "They planned it as a humanitarian exercise," he says. "They planned not to use force. And they hamstrung themselves."

The most public example of the United Nations' inability to bring protection or peace, he notes, was when lightly armed Dutch peacekeeping troops were held hostage by Bosnian Serb forces in Srebrenica in July 1995, and turned over thousands of Bosnian Muslims in exchange for the release of 14 Dutch soldiers. The Serbs eventually massacred some 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica. Photographs of the hapless Dutch were flashed around the world as visible proof that U.N. peacekeepers lacked the ability to defend even themselves.

The Somali and Bosnian experiences were diplomatic, military and humanitarian disasters. "There was no clear operational doctrine for the kinds of things they were doing," says Keating, who served on the U.N. Security Council during that bleak period. "So they made it up as they went along."

Successful Missions

A U.N. mission that helped bring Namibia to independence in 1989 is often cited as a major peacekeeping success story. The U.N. negotiated a protocol allowing the peaceful withdrawal of Marxist rebels from the South-West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) and Cuban and South African troops.

"Never before had the U.N. devised a peace and independence plan supported by such a web of political agreements, institutional arrangements and administrative buildup," writes Sitkowski, who served with the operation.

In Liberia, a watershed election in 2005 — monitored by the United Nations, the European Union and the Economic Community of West African States — appears to have ended decades of turmoil and violence and translated "security gains into meaningful, political and economic progress," according to the U.N.-supported *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations.*[43]

Liberia's newly elected president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, has become increasingly visible on the world stage. An economist and former U.N. development official with a Harvard master's degree, she has earned the nickname "Iron Lady" for her ability to do tough jobs normally undertaken by "strongmen" in Africa.[44]

AFP/Getty Images/Issouf Sanogo

The first all-female U.N. force, more than 100 policewomen from India, arrives at Liberia's Roberts International Airport in Monrovia on Jan. 30, 2007. The women will spend at least six months in Liberia, a nation emerging from years of brutal civil war.

"Our peace is so fragile," she said, "that we need a continuation of the U.N. peacekeeping force for at least three to four years, until our own security forces have been restructured and professionalized."[45]

Since 2005 the United Nations' first all-female peacekeeping unit, 103 women from India, has been stationed in Liberia. (*See sidebar, p. 8.*) "The women have quickly become part of Monrovia's urban landscape in their distinctive blue camouflage fatigues and flak jackets," said *The Christian Science Monitor.* "They guard the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, patrol the streets day and night, control crowds at rallies and soccer games and respond to calls for armed backup from the national police who, unlike the Indian unit, do not carry weapons."[46]

CURRENT SITUATION

Force Expansion

The Security Council voted on Jan. 11, 2007, to set up a modest political mission in Nepal to oversee a disarmament and cease-fire accord between the government and former Maoist rebels.[47]

AFP/Getty Images/Eric Cabanis

Jasmina Zukic, a Muslim who lost 16 family members in the Balkans war, prays at the cemetery in Potocari, Bosnia, where she is waiting for the arrival and reburial of the remains of 610 Bosnian Muslim men, discovered in a mass grave on July 9, 2005. Local Serbs had killed more than 8,000 men and boys under the eyes of U.N. peacekeepers from The Netherlands.

The action came after a spate of significant growth for robust U.N. peacekeeping operations. During the last six months of 2006, the Security Council sent peacekeepers to maintain peace in southern Lebanon, prepare East Timor for reconciliation and stem the violence in Darfur. This built on rapid growth in the numbers and size of peace operations in recent years.

Secretary-General Ban wants to create a new office from the United Nations' 700-person peacekeeping department. It would focus entirely on supporting field operations and provide "a clear line of command, point of responsibility and accountability for field support," says U.N. spokeswoman Montas. That effort would bolster the R2P concept, she says, which is "to protect as rapidly as possible."

Montas points to the confusion and hesitation of the dark moments in the 1990s. "The U.N. had that painful experience of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia," she says. "Things will have to be done better."

But Ban's peacekeeping reform efforts have been met with hesitation by the General Assembly, leading one European envoy to warn of "death by a thousand meetings."[48]

A major challenge looming for U.N. peacekeeping is the expansion of the force itself. With a potential 40 percent increase in the number of peacekeepers looming in 2007, the Security Council may have to cut short existing operations. That would be a mistake, says former Ambassador Keating. "Leave too early," he says, "chances are you'll be back again in five years."

China and Sudan

In Sudan, mistrust has complicated efforts to get more peacekeeping troops to curb the horrors of Darfur. Sudan's regime, seen as both hostile and uncooperative by the West, is equally suspicious about U.N. involvement.

Sudan's U.N. Ambassador Abdalhaleem accuses Western nations of withholding support for the African Union in order to promote U.N. peacekeepers. "Their objective is to make it weak because their objective is to bring blue helmets in Darfur," he charges.

On Feb. 7, during the first visit ever by a Chinese leader to Sudan, President Hu Jintao asked Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir to give the United Nations a bigger role in trying to resolve the conflict in Darfur. Hu also said China wanted to do more business with its key African ally, according to Sudan state media reports.

Beijing has at least a two-fold strategy in courting Africa: political interest in influencing the 50-plus nations in Africa and a commercial interest in fueling its increasingly voracious economic engine with Sudanese oil and the continent's plentiful natural resources.[49]

Hu had been under Western pressure to do more to use his clout as Sudan's largest oil customer and international investor to push it to accept U.N. peacekeepers in Darfur.

A month later al-Bashir continued his defiance, telling an Arab League meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, that the proposed U.N.-AU force would be "a violation of Sudan's sovereignty and a submission by Sudan to outside custodianship."[50]

Arab leaders have been asked to step in to pressure Bashir. After a two-hour meeting with al-Bashir, Saudi Arabian King Abdullah and high-level Arab League and AU representatives, U.N. Secretary-General Ban told reporters, "I think we made progress where there had been an impasse. The king's intervention very much supported my position."

By April 4, as news broke that five AU peacekeepers had been killed in Darfur, Britain and the United States said they were drafting a U.N. resolution to impose financial sanctions and a possible "no-fly" zone over Darfur to punish Sudan's continued intransigence. Secretary-General Ban asked that a sanction vote be delayed to give

him time for more negotiations planned in Africa and New York.[51]

On April 15, Saudi officials said Bashir told King Abdullah that an agreement had been reached for the hybrid AU-U.N. force. But given Bashir and Sudan's record of seeming to cooperate — and then pulling back after reports of agreement — the situation will be uncertain until more peacekeepers are actually in place in Darfur.

Meanwhile, China announced a new military cooperation deal with Sudan, a move one U.N. diplomat described as "pre-emptive." China appeared to be rushing to sign as many deals as possible with Sudan before economic and military sanctions are imposed on Khartoum, he said.[52]

Before Hu's February trip, Western observers, including Deller of the group Responsibility to Protect, had described China as "the great obstructer" in efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis.

Not surprisingly, Hen Wenping, director of African studies at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, defended communist China's approach to Darfur: "China's strategy remains the same, and as always, it used quiet diplomacy to keep a constructive engagement, rather than waving a stick."[53]

Traditionally, none of the five permanent, veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council contributes many U.N. peacekeeping troops, since their influence in world affairs would compromise their neutrality. But China, one of the five, has emerged as a newly enthusiastic supporter of peacekeeping.

"China firmly supports and actively participates in U.N. peacekeeping operations," said Chinese Ambassador to the U.N. Zhang Yishan in late February. "Up till now, China's contribution in terms of personnel to 15 U.N. peacekeeping operations has reached the level of more than 5,000, and as we speak, there are about 1,000 Chinese peacekeepers serving in 13 mission areas."[54]

"China could flood the market of U.N. peacekeeping if they wanted to," French defense official Guicherd remarks. "Just like they are flooding other markets."

Afghanistan and Beyond

European nations responded tepidly last winter when the U.S.-led alliance in Afghanistan called for more NATO troops, frustrating the Bush administration and NATO officials. The alliance had sought more troops to combat an expected offensive by Taliban insurgents, and top officials warned of dire consequences if European nations didn't deliver. Frustrating NATO military efforts even more, Germany, France and Italy restricted the number of their troops taking part in the heavy fighting in southeastern Afghanistan, where the insurgency has shown its greatest strength.[55]

"I do not think it is right to talk about more and more military means," said German Defense Minster Franz Josef Jung. "When the Russians were in Afghanistan, they had 100,000 troops and didn't win."

Nonetheless, the German cabinet voted in February to send at least six Tornado jets to the front for surveillance operations against the Taliban. "Without security there is no reconstruction," said a chastened Jung, "and without reconstruction there's no security."[56]

The cost of continued combat duty in Afghanistan may influence the debate among NATO nations. Afghanistan has given the NATO organization "their very first taste of significant ground combat," says international law Professor Smith. "They're suffering casualties in ways they had not anticipated. NATO states are beginning to see people coming home in body bags and are wondering why they are involved at all."

Failure in Afghanistan could affect NATO's desire to project its military might in any new peacekeeping operations beyond Europe. "In the long run, there will be enough uncertainty in the world that members of NATO will understand that they must remain capable to some extent, but how far they are willing to stretch themselves will remain under consideration and debate," Smith adds.

Meanwhile, NATO intervention to serve as a buffer between Israel and the Palestinians remains a future possibility, but French defense official Guicherd says NATO is linked too closely with U.S. policy. Given the tension and the acute anti-Americanism in the region, she says, "it wouldn't be a very good idea for the time being."[57]

But NATO member Turkey could provide an entré into the Middle East, points out Smith. Turkey enjoys good relations with Israel and is a majority-Muslim country whose troops might be more acceptable to Arab populations. Smith calls it an "interesting idea. . . . Turkey has NATO [military] capabilities. They might actually play a meaningful role."

As *Turkish Daily News* columnist Hans De Wit put it, "The current situation in the Middle East is, in fact, a perfect chance for Turkey to show its negotiating skills, since its has good relations with all countries in this region.

"But somehow, its image as a former conqueror doesn't help. Turkey has done a terrible job in convincing the world that its intentions . . . are sincere; that it can bring mediation to the region and can be a stabilizer of importance."[58]

OUTLOOK

Is the World Ready?

As the still-uncertain response to Darfur indicates, countries around the world and at the United Nations are not rushing to every emergency call. "The international community has to prove that it is willing to step into difficult situations — and it may yet again," says former New Zealand Ambassador Keating. "But I wouldn't assume that it would every time."

The high ideals and bold aims articulated by the Responsibility to Protect doctrine may be tempered not only by whether the world has the will to send troops in to halt a massacre but also by whether there will be enough troops.

While it strives to play an increasing role around the world, NATO may be tied down at home. Kosovo is set to receive some form of U.N.-decreed independence from a reluctant Serbia, but the Balkans could again be rocked by the kind of bloody ethnic violence that marked the 1990s.

Such renewed ethnic hostility could challenge the NATO stabilization force, requiring the alliance to bolster its troop counts in Kosovo — and slow NATO efforts to export its peacekeeping influence elsewhere.

As the R2P concept takes root, however, pressure may increase for the kind of muscular intervention that only military forces like NATO troops can deliver.

"The right of an individual to live is a higher priority, at least in theory, than the right of states to do as they please," says former U.S. diplomat Feinstein. "Something important is happening in theory, and practice is lagging very far behind."

More than just words will be needed to make the Responsibility to Protect viable, says U.N. spokeswoman Montas. "The political will has to be there," she says, "and the political will has to come from the Security Council."

There is plenty of military might around the world to translate "theory into reality," according to former Australian foreign minister Evans. "The U.N. is feeling desperately overstretched . . . but with the world's armed services currently involving some 20 million men and women in uniform (with another 50 million reservists, and 11 million paramilitaries)," he observes, "it hardly seems beyond the wit of man to work out a way of making some of that capacity available . . . to prevent and react to man-made catastrophe."[59]

For many people, U.N. police official Lopes says, "We are the last port before Hell."

Having served on the Security Council during the Rwanda bloodbath, former Ambassador Keating knows all too well the limitations of U.N. action. Each case is weighed on "its own particular location in time as well as geography — and whether or not the resources are physically available to undertake the task that's envisaged," he says.

In Darfur, for example, there is the additional problem of mistakenly harming civilians, he says, so the council must weigh the "kind of scenario in which the bad guys and the good guys are almost stuck together." That's "one of the daunting things that's confronting any action with respect to Sudan — being 'realistic' about the situation," he says.

"It's unforgivable, really, when you think about the 'Never Again' statements" made after the Holocaust, Keating says, "but the reality is at the moment there's no willingness to do it."

Peacekeeping expert Holt, at the Stimson Center, calls peacekeeping "an enduring tool," even though "it's always criticized for falling short of our hopes. But we keep turning back to it.

"A lot of these lessons are learnable and fixable," she adds. Peacekeeping continues to evolve, it's a moving exercise," with very real global stakes. "Millions of people's lives remain in the balance if we don't get this right."

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For More Information

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