

Peacekeeping, Disarmament and International Force: A Circular Proposition

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The last fifty years has seen continuously changing ideas regarding the UN's role in peacekeeping and disarmament. There has been a shift from UN involvement in "classical" peacekeeping activities to a more challenging "second generation" of peacekeeping which encompasses far more various and complex challenges and activities — normally in the context of a failed state or intrastate crisis. Disarmament, once at the forefront of UN negotiations, has been overshadowed by issues such as development, the environment and human rights. Additionally, support for a standing force has waxed and waned considerably — and in some cases those who were once its firmest supporters are now its staunchest critics.

Yet, from the very origins of the United Nations, the idea of a UN permanent military force has periodically re-emerged. Some of the interest has been in direct connection with the UN's successes and drawbacks in deploying military forces in crises such as Palestine (1948), Korea (1950), Suez (1956) and the Congo (1963), and more recently, the Gulf War (1991). The debate on an international force has also evolved at the rhythm of disarmament efforts: a fact often forgotten, an international force had originally been conceived in the UN Charter as a necessary complement to disarmament measures, a possible instrument of control and sanction.

In this article an attempt is made to retrace the link between disarmament objectives and provision for UN military forces in the UN Charter. The paper then focuses on the historical interconnection between proposals for international force and disarmament efforts simultaneously with the development of the UN peacekeeping machinery and doctrine. Finally, it will be seen that the link between disarmament and peacekeeping and proposals for international force is still viable today under a different form — in the efforts to address the challenges posed by the disarming of factions in internal conflicts.

International force as an organ of control and sanction

The UN, a phoenix born again from the ashes of the League of Nations, was the immediate product of the Second World War. As early as 1943, Harold Stassen, a signatory of the UN Charter and a pioneer in promoting the idea of UN Legion, suggested the creation of a 'Keep the Peace Force', to be directly recruited on a quota basis and 'consisting of units of air, naval and mechanized

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land forces made up of citizens of the United Nations'. The international force would not have supplanted military forces of individual nations, at least initially, but the importance of the latter could gradually decrease in proportion to the confidence placed in the ability of the UN Legion to enforce the code of justice, support UN administration of airways, seaways and trusteeships and ensure disarmament of potential aggressors.¹

On 14 December 1946, the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 41(I) regarding 'the problem of security as closely connected with that of disarmament' and therefore recommended 'the Security Council to accelerate as much as possible the placing at its disposal of the armed forces mentioned in Article 43 of the Charter'. According to Art. 47, the Military Staff Committee (MSC) was 'to advise and assist the Security Council on all questions relating to the Security Council's military requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, the employment and command of forces placed at its disposal, the regulation of armaments, and possible disarmament'. Art. 46 charged the Security Council (assisted by the MSC) with making plans for the application of armed force. Art. 26 provided that the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating — with the assistance of the MSC — plans to be submitted to the Members of the UN for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments.

The MSC was to consist of the Chiefs of Staff of the Permanent Members of the Security Council or their representatives. Any Member of the United Nations not permanently represented on the Committee was to be invited to be associated with it when efficient discharge of the Committee's responsibility required the participation of that Member in its work.

Although the ideals were prescribed in the UN Charter, the MSC (and the establishment of a standing force) floundered. The main problem, beyond the inherent limitations of the planned arrangements, appeared to be the implementation of the Charter system itself. As its realization ultimately depended on the goodwill of Member States on a case-by-case basis, the military provisions remained a dead letter. An additional aggravating factor was the beginning of the Cold War, making any agreement by the major powers on the subject of military forces highly hypothetical. Due to the failure to establish such forces, the MSC never played a significant role and has remained since 1948 'a meaningless ritual kept in notional existence for the sake of form'.²

The deadlock of the MSC over the question of an international military force seriously compromised any prospect for a system of arms regulation within the UN security framework. Yet, if the creation of an international military force was, from the very beginning, linked to sufficient national disarmament, it was only logical that any substantial progress made in the field of disarmament be accompanied by greater hopes that such a force could be established. As noted by Joseph Noguee, '[r]elying on the assistance of the same group to create both an international army and a system of arms regulation may seem unusual, but it was a natural consequence of what the major powers considered to be a necessary interconnection'.³ The subsequent 'chicken and the egg' debate, on whether an international force should be a precondition or the consequence of disarmament at the international level, would put in perspective the inherent contradictions of international relations.

Given the powerful character of the inhibiting factors, only a major crisis of international security — making it appear a vital necessity overriding all narrow considerations — could make the idea of a UN permanent military force become a potential option. In the very first years of the UN's existence, two major crises would challenge the ability of the Organization to carry out its mission, both in terms of credibility and legitimacy: Palestine, in 1948 and Korea, in 1950.

The link to disarmament

The President of the American Federation of Justice, Ewing Cockrell, had suggested to Secretary of State Marshall and other Department officials on 4 October 1948 that the American Government press for a UN police force in the atomic energy control discussions proposed in Paris by the Soviet delegation. On 2 December 1948, President Truman, in a letter to Senator Elbert Thomas of Utah, wrote that he would 'talk disarmament and talk it in dead earnest' when there was a 'sufficient police force for United Nations to maintain the peace of the world'.⁴ 'In a disarmed world — should it be attained —,' said General Dwight D. Eisenhower on 23 March 1950, 'there must be an effective United Nations, with a police power universally recognized and strong enough to earn universal respect'.⁵ The paradox, as explained by Frederick C. McKee, Chairman of the Committee on National Affairs of the American Association for the United Nations, was only apparent: '[E]ven if all the nations of the world consented to inspection and control of all weapons, it would still be essential that the United Nations had its own forces and weapons located at strategic points throughout the world to guard against inspection evasion and clandestinely armed conspiracies which might seize control of an unarmed world.'⁶

Signs of an evolution of the idea of a UN permanent military force linked to disarmament appeared at the time of the Korea crisis. The enforcement action was, in the words of the Representative of New Zealand at the General Assembly, 'the first time that anything approaching an international police force [had] been seen in operation'.⁷ Given the paralysis of the MSC, progress towards the establishment of a truly international force could only be achieved through the General Assembly which, under Art. 11 of the Charter, 'may consider the general principles of co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security'. Such responsibility includes the 'principles governing the regulation of armament', regarding which the General Assembly may make recommendations to Member States, the Security Council or both.

Drawing lessons from an operation in which the MSC had played no role in the strategic direction of the action, the General Assembly approved on 3 November 1950 the Uniting for Peace Resolution.⁸ The resolution reaffirmed that the initiative in negotiating agreements for armed forces provided in Art. 43 of the Charter belonged to the Security Council. Yet the General Assembly did not exclude a possible failure of the Security Council to exercise its primary responsibility in the case of a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression. In such cases, the General Assembly could make appropriate recommendations to Member States to restore international peace and security pending the conclusion of Art. 43 agreements.

The resolution also aimed at ensuring that the UN had at its disposal adequate means for this purpose. To this end, the General Assembly invited Member States to maintain elements within their own national armed force so trained, organized and equipped that they could promptly be made available for service as a UN unit, or units, upon recommendation by the Security Council and the General Assembly. At the same time, it established a Collective Measures Committee (CMC) to study and report to the Security Council and the General Assembly on methods that might be used to maintain and strengthen international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, including a UN Legion.

Yet, if the UN were to prevent aggression, whatever its origin, a 'UN Legion' would never be enough. The only viable solution in the long run appeared to be disarmament. On 28 February 1951, a group of twenty-three American Senators and Representatives asked in a letter to President Truman that a plea be made at the UN General Assembly for peace through disarmament. Among the measures proposed was the establishment of a UN police force 'superior in size and armament

to any force available to the member nations for maintenance of civil order'.⁹ For Katzin, in 1952: 'it must be recognized that in the final analysis, and for so long as universal disarmament is not a major part of any overall United Nations collective security plan, the UN will always have to rely primarily upon the total resources of its member states to resist an act of aggression'.¹⁰

The Suez operation in 1956, and the setting up of the UN Emergency Force (UNEF), demonstrated the advantages of a quickly deployable international force. While in 1957 the General Assembly declared total nuclear disarmament as the ultimate objective to be pursued, the abandonment of several disarmament proposals led experts to explore new paths in the connection between disarmament and a standing force.

Disarmament: precondition or consequence?

In 1958, India, in its opposition at the General Assembly to the idea of a directly recruited permanent force, explicitly linked the creation of an international police force to world disarmament.¹¹ For the Indian delegation, preconditions for the establishment of a police force included, apart from world disarmament, the establishment of world law, the existence of 'some sovereign authority that must be obeyed' and the possibility of exercising sanctions — all conditions 'which may take years to come about'.¹²

The same year, Philip Noel-Baker, author of *The Arms Race — A Proposal for World Disarmament*, wrote: 'Until recently, the creation of an international police seemed Utopian. With the success of the UN Emergency Force in Sinai, and the pledges of many governments to cooperate in the establishment of a standing UN Force, it has become real politics.'¹³ Convinced that the organization of an international air police presented no particular technical problem, Noel-Baker saw it as a guarantee against aggression. Recalling that UNEF never exceeded 6,100 in strength, Noel-Baker proposed a relatively modest force of 10,000–20,000 to be rapidly expanded as disarmament progresses and needs demand. The air police, composed of directly recruited volunteers, could also perform other functions in maintaining peace and in serving a UN standing force to be created.

The force he imagined would have consisted of long-term volunteers, recruited individually by the UN, with quotas for different nations to ensure a fair balance. At least at the beginning, the commanding officer and staff would be chosen from among nationals of the middle and smaller states. The force would have exclusive loyalty to the UN, and should be paid, equipped and armed with funds borne on the UN budget. It should not be furnished with heavy arms. It should have permanent bases — training depots, leave stations, etc. — of its own, in a number of different countries. The main function of the force would be interposition and supervisory, wherever it might be required, similar to UNEF in the Sinai. Other functions might be guard duties, the supervision of demilitarized zones, and the protection of fissile material stockpiles maintained by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Ideally, the Director-General of the IAEA — which according to its statute is given responsibility for the safety of "strategic" distribution of stockpiles in different regions of the world — could use the international force. Noel-Baker was ready to go as far as accepting a UN international force with nuclear stocks. What was needed, he concluded, was a new 'grand design and overall plan'. Such proposals, he wrote, were not 'starry eyed' idealism, but 'plain, realistic, common sense'.¹⁴

If a permanent international force appeared an ideal instrument of control and sanction in the context of disarmament, it was not necessarily clear what should come first: depending on the

perspective, the existence of a UN Peace Force could be seen as a precondition of, an instrument for or the ultimate consequence of disarmament. The UN continued to champion the importance of disarmament. In 1959, 'general and complete disarmament' was proclaimed by the General Assembly to be the ultimate aim of disarmament efforts. Indeed, the problem of arms control could not be isolated from the one of disarmament as the opportunities for — and the risks resulting from — cheating had increased with the existence of nuclear capabilities. The General Assembly placed on its agenda an item entitled 'General and Complete Disarmament under Effective International Control', while agreements on partial disarmament were pursued concurrently. The idea of an international permanent military force had found a new forum.

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THE NUCLEAR THREAT

On 17 September 1959, a proposal was made before the General Assembly by the United Kingdom for a disarmament process in three stages. According to the proposal, an 'international control organ' would reach 'its final form and attain full capability for keeping peace' at the end of the process envisaged.¹⁵

Nikita Khrushchev's address to the 799th Meeting of the General Assembly, on 18 September 1959, marked a turning point in the debate because it came from the Soviet block. States, he said, 'should be allowed to retain only strictly limited police (militia) contingents — of a strength agreed upon for each country — equipped with light fire-arms and intended solely for the maintenance of internal order and the protection of citizens' safety.'¹⁶ A few days later, the Danish Representative to the General Assembly declared: 'In our opinion, UNEF has met with considerable success as to warrant giving serious consideration to at least some steps towards the establishment of a permanent United Nations force. The question of creating such a force is also connected to the problem of total disarmament.'¹⁷ A permanent UN force was seen as a means to enforce disarmament under effective international control, the logical corollary of the operation of an international law ensuring good order and of international authorities to prevent or suppress conflicts.¹⁸

The reflection on international force in connection with the threat of nuclear conflict reached a peak in 1961. The Soviet installation of surface-to-air missiles in Cuba, following Kennedy's unsuccessful attempt to invade the country and overthrow Fidel Castro in April 1961, placed the United States at close range of Soviet weapons. The Bay of Pigs fiasco and the ensuing missile crisis focused the world's attention on the dangers of the nuclear precipice. That year, the philosopher Bertrand Russell published *Has Man a Future?* in which he proposed the creation of a world government and of an international force, including the possibility of direct international enlistment and the manufacturing of weapons by the World Authority.¹⁹

AMERICAN PROPOSALS

The American response to Khrushchev's disarmament proposal came in Kennedy's optimistic address to the General Assembly of 25 September 1961. What the United States President proposed was not only a programme for general and complete disarmament, but also an international capacity to keep peace:

The programme to be presented to this Assembly — for general and complete disarmament under effective international control — moves to bridge the gap between those who insist on a gradual approach and those who talk only of the final and total achievement. It would create a machinery to keep peace as it destroys the machinery of war. ... It would achieve, under the eyes of an international disarmament organization, a steady reduction in force, both nuclear and conventional, until it had abolished all armies and all weapons except those needed for internal order and a new United Nations peace force. And it starts that process now, today, as this talk begins.²⁰

The American proposal for a 'Peace Force' was in fact only the earmarking by all Member States of specially trained and quickly available peacekeeping units in their armed forces to be on-call to the UN with advance provision for financial and logistic support. President Kennedy's proposal was nevertheless heartily saluted by Nepal, Guinea, Pakistan and Greece at the General Assembly.²¹ Under American leadership, the question of disarmament became a leitmotiv of the various proposals for a permanent force made by individuals, researchers and scholars, paving the way for an ambitious American proposal at the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENCD)²² in 1962.

Two works are particularly striking of the efforts to promote the idea of a UN Peace Force in connection with disarmament: the 1958 plan proposed by G. Clark and L.B. Sohn in *World Peace Through World Law* and the study prepared by L.P. Bloomfield, *A World Effectively Controlled by the United Nations*, at the Institute of Defense Analysis (IDA), Washington, DC, for the United States Department of State.

The proposal by two American lawyers, Clark and Sohn, contained a detailed plan for a world police force sufficiently powerful and prompt to suppress any threat to the world's peace.²³ The plan, emphasizing the importance of a reliable world police force on the model of those used for the maintenance of order in large cities, rested on two assumptions:

- that a permanent and indisputably international force is necessary to take the place of national armaments; and
- that it would not be feasible to maintain an adequate world police force unless disarmament is universal and complete.

The force envisaged should therefore be built up parallel with, and proportionate to, the process of national disarmament that, according to the plan, should take place within a ten-year period. The concept was put forward together with a proposal for a revised UN Charter recognizing the primary responsibility of the General Assembly for the maintenance of peace and making provision for the measures to ensure compliance, including the use of the UN Peace Force.²⁴ Drawing direct lessons from the experiences of Korea and Suez, the UN Peace Force would not be composed of national contingents but of individual volunteers recruited directly from all nations under a quota system by nationality. The proposed force would consist of two components: a full-time Standing Force of between 200,000 and 600,000; and a Peace Force Reserve, with a strength of between 600,000 and 1,200,000. To control the force, an Executive Council and a MSC of five persons appointed from the smaller nations was envisaged. Decision for enforcement action would rest with the General Assembly, except for emergency action decided by the Executive Council. Such actions would be limited to measures to prevent or suppress violent aggression or serious defiance of the UN authority.²⁵

*A World Effectively Controlled by the United Nations*²⁶ was published on 10 March 1962 by L.P. Bloomfield, then associate professor of political science and Director of the Arms Control Project at the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is above all a discussion

of one particular form of a 'stable environment' — the UN as a global authority — and an attempt to sketch out the possible contours of such a system from the perspective of American interests. It undoubtedly paved the way for the American proposal later submitted to the ENCD. One of its merits is that it tackles the difficult question of feasibility. What Bloomfield had in mind was clearly supra-national institutions. Under the terms of the new international constitution, nations would be disarmed to police levels so as to be capable of ensuring only domestic security. Such national forces were derived from the present size of local, civil and state police, to which should be added national law enforcement personnel such as federal marshals, customs agents, border patrols and so on. Limited world government should, from this perspective, have sufficient powers 'to monitor and enforce disarmament, settle dispute, and keep the peace', including enforceable taxing powers to finance its political organs, a disarmament policy agency, and an international military force. The proposed international force would consist of 500,000 men, recruited individually and wearing a distinctive UN uniform. It would be composed of appropriately balanced ground, sea, air and space elements, including a nuclear component.

The United States proposed in early 1962 the establishment of a UN force in the drafts of the comprehensive and ambitious disarmament treaty submitted to the ENCD in Geneva on 18 April 1962.²⁷ Entitled *Outline of the Basic Provisions of a Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World*,²⁸ it made provision for an international military force and effective procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes.²⁹

According to the *Outline*, disarmament would be implemented progressively and in a balanced manner. This way, no state or group of states could at any stage obtain a military advantage. To ensure this, the national disarmament process would be accompanied by a gradual strengthening of the UN. Disarmament would be accomplished in three stages, the first and second stages to be carried out over a total period of six years each, the third stage as promptly as possible within an agreed period. Stage I would be initiated by the United States, the Soviet Union, and other agreed states. During Stage I, the parties would agree on:

- examination of the experience of the UN leading to a further strengthening of UN forces for keeping the peace;
- examination of the feasibility of promptly conducting the agreements envisaged in Art. 43 of the UN Charter; and
- conclusion of an agreement for the establishment of a UN Peace Force in Stage II, including definitions of its purpose, mission, composition and strength, disposition, command and control, training, logistical support, financing, equipment and armaments.³⁰

During the same period, parties to the Treaty would also agree on the establishment of a standing UN Peace Observation Corps. The Corps, of which elements would be based in selected areas throughout the world, would be dispatched promptly to investigate any situation that might constitute a threat to peace. During Stage II, involving the participation of the most significant states, the UN Peace Force would be established and progressively strengthened, while arrangements for the expansion of the UN Peace Observation Corps would be agreed upon. Towards the end of Stage III, in which all states possessing armaments and armed forces would be involved, the UN Peace Force would have been strengthened to the point where no state could challenge it.

The *Outline* was presented by the American government as 'far-reaching'. The proposal, its promoters apparently believed, could be put into effect quickly and would meet the objections made to earlier plans while satisfying the security needs of all participating nations. It represented a 'total approach', the main ambitious objective being not so much the destruction of arms, but rather the elimination of war and the building of a secure and lasting peace. Arms reduction was envisaged

as part of a more general peace-building process, including measures to enable the UN to become an effective agency for keeping the peace in a disarmed world.

The various American proposals for a UN Peace Force also shared a number of weaknesses. Very ambitious in their objectives, they were based on general principles, mainly that disarmament and the development of a 'peacekeeping machinery' designed to enforce it are two sides of the same coin. Yet they provide little information on the actual design of the institutions envisaged. In particular, the actual recruitment, composition and control of the proposed Peace Force are never discussed in detail. Moreover, the definition of the rules of international conduct relating to disarmament, essential to determine the situations in which the UN Peace Force should be used, is left to interpretation.

Several other official proposals for a UN Force were also made in 1961–62 in connection with disarmament talks. The East-West Conference in Warsaw, meeting between 3 and 6 February 1961, adopted the principle of an international police force to replace national armed forces. On 17 March 1961, the Final Statement of the British Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting in London called for a 'substantial and adequately armed military force' to be established.

STANDING OR AD HOC FORCE?

By the early 1960s, the idea of an ad hoc 'Peace Force' had already eclipsed proposals for permanent military forces at the disposal of the UN for peacekeeping or enforcement purposes. The

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UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC) contributed to discouraging supporters of a more permanent arrangement. *Ad hoc* peacekeeping had demonstrated a number of advantages, very often by default. First of all, the UN's involvement was considered heavily dependent on the existence of a sufficient coalition of Member States to deal with an issue, which would in any case reduce the number of actual instances of involvement. Second,

in UN peacekeeping, the use of force was considered undesirable and unlikely to secure its objectives. The limited attempts to use force during the Congo operation were to remain an exception and raised endless controversies. There did not exist any consensus among Member States except for limited peacekeeping-type operations. In addition, the Secretariat could staff additional operations from existing ones, such as the UN Truce Supervision Organization or UN Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). While a small number of states were regularly willing to provide troops,³¹ some countries, especially those in Scandinavia, had undertaken to provide them with special training and had even designated specific stand-by units for peacekeeping missions. Therefore, for all the above mentioned reasons, until the end of the Cold War the idea of a standing UN force in relation to peacekeeping was only tentative.

Even if ONUC in the 1960s had contributed to discouraging supporters of a more permanent international military arrangement, at the same time widely shared hopes for a larger UN role were echoed.³² Ad hoc peacekeeping had started to demonstrate its limits. ONUC was the first UN intervention in the context of a failed state.³³ Among actions for which traditional peacekeeping troops appeared ill-prepared or inadequate were: preventing border clashes from breaking into full-scale war; discouraging third parties from supplying military equipment to parties to the conflict; intervening for humanitarian purposes, including providing sanctuary for non-combatants who seek shelter during civil wars and attempting to quell internal conflicts that have genocidal tendencies; enforcing international norms within countries; and monitoring and enforcement of arms reduction.

Even for interposition purposes, availability of forces proved problematic: in the case of the second UN Emergency Force (UNEF II), for instance, only a transfer of troops from UNFICYP ensured immediate deployment. Worse, the 'peacekeeping only' doctrine was becoming contradictory with some of the basic principles and values of the UN. The injury and death of innocent people in the Lebanese civil war in 1976, the Nigerian civil war (1967–70), the conflict leading to the creation of Bangladesh (1971), the violence in Northern Ireland, and the Kampuchean exodus and tragedy (1979–80) demonstrated the need for international law enforcement.³⁴

During the Cold War's East-West tension the main advantage of a truly international force was its potential impartial character, and therefore perceived increased legitimacy to control and implement disarmament. As the Cold War started to wind down, the interest for 'general and complete disarmament under UN control' lost its intensity and therefore the disarmament aspect of a UN force lost its audience. In 1987, mentioning proposals for a special UN Preparedness Review Group to be created for increased readiness of UN troops, Ernst Haas noted that 'None of these ideas seems timely, given the growing indifference to local wars on the part of many UN Members and the continuous effectiveness of peacekeeping, ad hoc though it is, under conditions when a consensus for action does exist'. After carefully analyzing the question of whether ad hoc procedures sufficed for successful peacekeeping at that time, he concluded 'It appears as if the ad hoc arrangements now prevailing can do the job'.³⁵ Whether the world community's peace and security can be ensured by the lowest common denominator of agreement remains a doubtful proposition. Yet the link between proposals for peacekeeping efforts, disarmament processes and international force has not totally disappeared: it has taken a different track, parallel to the evolution of international security.

From 'general and complete disarmament' to the disarmament of factions

With the end of the Cold War, the focus on global disarmament started to fade away, and so did the debate on an international force for disarmament of states. The new challenge was the disarmament of groups, parties and factions within the boundaries of a state, either following a peace accord (as in Cambodia), the facilitation of a humanitarian operation (as in Somalia) or the protection of potentially threatened civilians (as in Bosnia). The question of disarmament of factions within states or failed states in the context of emerging internal conflicts has become a serious concern. Today's internal conflicts are seen as a potential threat to international peace and security, and an international force could be a solution for disarmament in internal situations. Beyond the impartiality and legitimacy offered by an international force during the Cold War, today's international force seeks the necessary credibility to effectively disarm factions in intricate situations within the borders of states or failed states. Therefore, this period has seen a revival of the idea of a UN permanent military force, in connection with the 're-invention of collective security' at the time of the Gulf War and with the multiplication of internal conflicts.

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To be successful, such "second generation" peacekeeping operations often require the use of land troops, which is likely to involve casualties. In Somalia, the Turkish General Cevic Bir made it clear that the failure to disarm the factions was due not only to the lack of troops and equipment, but also to the willingness of some of the contributing countries to accept the level of violence and the losses in terms of human lives in a conflict where they have no direct interest.³⁶ The death of eighteen American soldiers on 3 October 1993 led to the American withdrawal from Somalia. Similarly, the loss of ten Belgian soldiers led to the departure of the Belgian contingent from Rwanda

in April 1994 at a time when UN military presence was most needed. As strikingly summarized by the Representative to the UN of one of the countries most involved in UN military operations, the Netherlands: 'We are quite willing to do something, but it mustn't cost too much money or the lives of our troops. And since the UN is entirely dependent on our generosity, all this has a direct and paralyzing effect on the working of the Organization. One of our soldiers counts for more than the fate of ten thousands Bosnians.'³⁷ Not so long ago, the debate on whether to use ground troops to intervene in Kosovo had a similar logic. Recent proposals for an international force to be placed at the disposal of the UN therefore concentrate on the advantage of direct recruitment of troops by the UN, in particular for the purpose of disarming factions in the context of internal conflicts.

The studies by Carl Conetta and Charles Knight are, from a military point of view, the most elaborate and far reaching. A first model was published by the two authors on 1 October 1995 under the title *Vital Force, A Proposal for the Overhaul of the UN Peace Operations System and for the Creation of a UN Legion*. This study was shortly followed by *Design for a 15,000-person UN Legion*, presenting a somewhat less ambitious version of the *Vital Force* proposal.³⁸

Initially conceived by its authors in 1992, *Vital Force* is part of an attempt to 'define the requirements for successful UN peace operations and to articulate the necessary components of institutional renovation and reform'.³⁹ As others before them, Conetta and Knight reached the conclusion that 'if the goal is a truly rapid, multilateral capability for peace operations, there is no substitute for a UN standing force'. What they therefore recommend is the development by the UN of a 'peace operations legion that can meet rapid deployment requirements and that can add a highly skilled, well-equipped, cohesive and reliable complement of troops to three or four multinational peace operations simultaneously'. Based on the authors' analysis of requirements — especially in the cases of Somalia, Cambodia, the Balkans and Rwanda — a UN capability to deploy and continuously maintain 15,000 troops would be sufficient to play such a leading or supportive role, thereby filling the gaps in recent peace operation deployments.⁴⁰ Making provision for troop and unit rotation, the proposed force would comprise a total of approximately 43,750 personnel in all, of which 32,650 would be deployable, allowing the UN to field up to 16,350 troops continuously. For missions such as the protection of safe areas and the disarmament of factions, a light mechanized infantry battalion, two light armoured cavalry troops, two artillery batteries and one air defence company could be added, thus constitute a 5,000-person reinforced brigade. In such cases, the UN Legion would be equipped with eighteen light tanks, sixteen 155-mm field pieces, thirty-three medium-heavy mortars, twelve mobile air defence systems, eighteen armed scout helicopters and some 200 other combat vehicles mounting a variety of weapons.

Carl Kaysen and Georges W. Rathjens, both members of the Defense and Arms Control Studies Program of the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have convincingly argued in favour of a 15,000 strong force. On the basis of case studies of the UN's involvement in the Congo, Yugoslavia, Somalia and Cambodia, they came to the conclusion that 'the world community could have, and in some instances likely would have, responded to each of these five crisis with greater effectiveness had a well-trained and equipped all-volunteer UN force been available'.⁴¹ Kaysen and Rathjens propose what they believe is the 'most realistic, effective, and politically feasible response to the hesitation of governments to commit their forces to UN operations: a modest standing UN military force composed entirely from volunteers from Member States as a sort of "UN Foreign Legion"'.⁴² While Conetta and Knight paid much attention to the structure, composition and organization and deployment of the force, Kaysen and Rathjens focused more on the possible comparative advantages and the political feasibility of a directly recruited military force under UN command.

Taking into account both the political context and the operational constraints, Kaysen and Rathjens envisage a force of 15,000 maximum of which 11,000 would be deployable, 5,500 being

deployable for long periods at a time. The annual cost of the force was estimated between US\$ 1.25 and US\$ 1.5 billion, the cost for equipment and facilities accounting for about 25% of the total cost, not including the preparation and maintenance of a base. An estimated US\$ 1.5 billion could also be necessary for initial equipment of the force, although one could expect substantial savings to be made by acquiring equipment from countries downsizing their military forces. Logistical capacities would be provided by Member States (essentially the United States). Among the tasks expected to be carried out by the force would be establishing, monitoring or supervising cantonment areas, demilitarized zones or buffer zones between warring parties, which may involve interposition by the force; and the support, supervision or implementation of a process of disarming and demobilizing warring factions.⁴³

While admitting that a standing UN force is no panacea, Kaysen and Rathjens came to the conclusion that a UN military volunteer force could have made an important difference had it been available for situations such as the Congo in the 1960s, and more recently in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Cambodia and Rwanda. In the Congo, the force might have helped obviate problems such as the withdrawal of several African military contingents. In Yugoslavia, a UN military volunteer force would have strengthened the position of Lord Carrington and Cyrus Vance and could have served to take enforcement actions against Serb forces flouting UN injunctions proscribing attacks against 'safe areas' and interference with humanitarian assistance in Croatia or Bosnia. In Somalia, the initial humanitarian relief mission could have been accomplished in less than one year without intervention of the United States Marines Corps, even though a much larger force would have been required to reach the wider objectives in the long run. In Cambodia, the force could have been deployed immediately after the Paris Agreement, thus facilitating an early start of the disarmament process and helping deter disorder. In all those situations, rapid deployment, better equipment and training, but also less sensitivity on the part of governments to the issues of casualties and national command would, according to the authors of the study, have given a clear advantage to a UN military volunteer force over other types of existing forces.

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In addition to those already mentioned, proposals for international force after the Cold War included the Dutch promotion of a UN Brigade, the Canadian concept of a Standing Emergency Group and Stassen's *United Nations — A Working Paper for Restructuring*, which included a revised Charter with a UN Legion.⁴⁴ Rather than providing immediate solutions, such proposals once again highlighted the limits of the international system, including the non-democratic structure of the Security Council, the need for prior development of regional intervention capacity and the limited capacity of the UN to intervene in all types of situations.

Conclusion

The reflection on a UN force carried out in the 1950s and 1960s in relation to plans for general and complete disarmament was far from useless. It highlighted the contradictions inherent to proposals for an international force, and made clear the interconnection between peacekeeping and disarmament efforts. Peacekeeping efforts during this time had underscored the importance of a favourable security environment and proper disarmament prior to the setting up of major humanitarian or democratization and peace-building operations.

The realization of the proposed system of general and complete disarmament during the Cold War rested on a fundamental dilemma: the subordination of states to a world government appeared impossible without the end of communism; at the same time, if the communist dynamic was greatly

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abated, the incentive for world government among Western countries might well be lost. Being paradoxically ‘unattainable when needed, and unneeded when attainable’, such a world ‘effectively controlled’ by the UN could only come about by the brink of war or a war combined with the general disappearance of communism.

Proposals for an international force, whether related to peacekeeping, disarmament or both, reflect both the weaknesses and potential of the United Nations. As once noted by Inis Claude,

the UN Charter is an incomplete document as ‘it postpones to the future — a future that shows no sign of arriving — the agreed allocation by states of military contingents to function as coercive instruments of the United Nations’.⁴⁵ Yet, clearly, ‘the first essential of a police force is that its power should be so considerable, and that of its opponents so negligible, that any contest will be virtually won before it has begun’.⁴⁶ From this point of view, even the system of on-call forces envisaged by the UN Charter in Art. 43, assuming that it could be implemented, would not provide a sufficient basis for collective security, both in terms of readiness and of capacity for sanctioning any aggressor, simply because its functioning is dependent on the goodwill of one or several of the major powers. Collective security is therefore a ‘circular proposition, demanding the prior satisfaction of requirements which can be satisfied only after collective security has become successfully operative, and purporting to solve problems by means which assume that the problems have already been solved’.⁴⁷ Such contradictions are the expression of a necessary interconnection, the fact that if the issue of disarmament is at the heart of international security, so is the question of international force.

Strikingly enough, the idea of a UN permanent military force is basically a Western invention, and its discussion has essentially been limited to Western circles. The historical ‘swinging’ evolution of American foreign policy, from Idealism to Realism, is also a factor in the evolution of the debate. In some ways, could not the extreme polarization of the debate itself also be symptomatic of a latent ‘Western’ conception of the world that tends to negate inherent contradictions of reality, privileging one principle over the other, force over ideal norms or vice versa? After all, one of the first consequences of Christianity — the dominant ideology of the West for centuries — has been the setting aside of Manichaeism, a philosophy based on a dualistic conception of the world. Major modern ideologies produced by the West such as Fascism, Nazism or Communism, may be seen as nothing more than the recurrent expression of a refusal to accept inherent contradictions of reality, putting their hopes in the victory of either one State, one race or one social class over others.

One of the major lessons of the history of the idea of a UN permanent military force is that the implementation of ideal norms and international law in human communities is a lengthy process with two apparently contradictory dimensions: cyclic, through recurrence of major crises, and linear, through gradual progression. Another lesson is that both the two major perspectives of international relations, realism and idealism, tend to utopianism when they are so extreme as to underestimate the importance of either one or the other essential parameters of world politics: force and the balance of power on the one hand, ideal norms and law on the other. At a time when major ideologies are believed to have become obsolete, it may be wise to put in question our ways of apprehending the world, and start approaching history and world politics in a more balanced and comprehensive way.

Notes

- ¹ H.E. Stassen, *Blueprint for a World Government*, *New York Times Magazine*, 23 May 1943, pp. 8, 34; H.E. Stassen, *We Need a World Government*, *Saturday Evening Post*, 22 May 1943. Stassen was appointed Special Assistant to President Eisenhower for Disarmament mid-March 1954 with cabinet rank to direct studies of United States and world disarmament. On his role during the 1950s see D.R. Inglis, *The Stassen Appointment: Turning Point in Disarmament Thinking?*, *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, 4 April 1955, pp. 556–57; M. Masters, *US-USSR Arms Control Initiatives, 1953–1960: Empty Offers and Fulfilled Prophecies*, paper presented at the Department of Government and International Studies at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, 11 May 1995, p. 4; H.E. Stassen, *Developing U.S Foreign Policy on Disarmament*, *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, 16 May 1955, p. 801–05; H.E. Stassen, *Disarmament and the President's Geneva Proposal*, *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, 31 October 1955, pp. 703–10. The author of *Eisenhower: Turning Toward World Peace* (1990), Stassen published in 1994 *United Nations — A Working Paper for Restructuring*, a revised Charter of the United Nations including a UN Legion.
- ² Eric Grove, *UN Armed Forces and the Military Staff Committee, A Look Back*, *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Spring 1993, p. 181. As observed by Richard Connaughton: 'The UN Charter establishes the principle that peace-enforcement measures may be legally sanctioned and initiated through UN headquarters. If force is to be applied at the behest of the United Nations, it surely needs a dedicated, professional military staff to consider contingency and ongoing planning. It is incongruous to maintain fully staffed headquarters in a central region where it has been agreed that minimal prospects of general conflict exist, while the one organization legally empowered to deploy forces is embarrassed by a poverty of military support staff'. R. Connaughton, *Military Intervention and UN Peacekeeping*, in N. Rodley, ed., *To Lose the Bands of Wickedness. International Intervention in the Defence of Human Rights*, Davies Memorial Institute, London, Brassey's, 1992, p. 194.
- ³ J. Noguee, *The Diplomacy of Disarmament*, New York, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1960, pp. 239–40 (*International Conciliation* No. 526).
- ⁴ *Talk of Arming the U.N. Untimely, U.S. Feels*, *New York Times*, 10 October 1948, p. 5; *U.N. Members Urged to Form Police Force*, *New York Times*, 11 October 1948, p. 3.
- ⁵ Address in McMillin Academic Theatre on 23 March 1950 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of Columbia University and wartime Supreme Allied Commander, in *Text of General Eisenhower's Address on Implementing of Peace in World*, *New York Times*, 24 March 1950, p. 5.
- ⁶ *Stronger U.N. Plan Backed Hearing*, *New York Times*, 25 May 1950, p. 7.
- ⁷ *Speech by Mr. Webb (New Zealand)*, General Assembly, Seventh Session, Plenary Meetings, 380th Meeting, 16 October 1952, General Assembly Official Records, para. 13, p. 34.
- ⁸ General Assembly res. 377 (V) A of 3 November 1950.
- ⁹ *23 Congressmen Give Truman Peace Plan*, *New York Times*, 1 March 1951, p. 13.
- ¹⁰ Colonel A.G. Katzin, *Collective Security: The Work of the Collective Measures Committee*, *Annual Review of United Nations Affairs*, 1952, p. 208.
- ¹¹ *Statement before the General Assembly on 7 October 1958*, General Assembly, 13th Session, Plenary Meetings, 774th Meeting, General Assembly Official Records, para. 37, p. 365.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ P. Noel-Baker, *The Arms Race. A Programme for World Disarmament*, London, Atlantic Books, Stevens & Sons Ltd., 1958, p. 438.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 438.
- ¹⁵ *Statement by Mr Lloyd (United Kingdom)*, General Assembly, 14th Session, Plenary Meetings, 798th Meeting, 17 September 1959, New York, General Assembly Official Records, para. 59, p. 25. The British plan was saluted by Noguee as a proposal for the creation of a 'peace force' and as 'a new feature of the Lloyd plan': 'Though not entirely novel, it does constitute a departure from recent efforts at disarmament. It marks a revival of the plan envisaged by the authors of the United Nations Charter linking disarmament with collective security'. J. Noguee, *op. cit.*, p. 292.
- ¹⁶ *Address to the General Assembly on 18 September 1959*, General Assembly, 14th Session, Plenary Meetings, 799th Meeting, General Assembly Official Records, para. 76, p. 36.
- ¹⁷ *Statement before the General Assembly on 25 September 1959*, General Assembly, 14th Session, Plenary Meetings, 809th Meeting, General Assembly Official Records, para. 25, p. 193.
- ¹⁸ *Statement before the General Assembly by Mr Novotny, President of the Czechoslovak Republic on 26 September 1960*, General Assembly, 15th Session, Plenary Meetings, 871st Meeting, General Assembly Official Records, p. 103. *Speech to the General Assembly by Mr Sapena Pastor (Paraguay) on 27 September 1960*, General Assembly, 15th Session, Plenary Meetings, 874th Meeting, General Assembly Official Records, para. 127, p. 166.

- ¹⁹ B. Russell, *Has Man a Future?*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1961, pp. 72–74, (Collection Penguin Books, no. 2/6). Another attempt to ‘think the unthinkable’: W. Young, *Strategy for Survival*, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1959, 95p.
- ²⁰ *Address by Mr. John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America*, General Assembly, 16th Session, Plenary Meetings, 1013th Meeting, 25 September 1961, New York, General Assembly Official Records, para. 55, pp. 56–57.
- ²¹ *Statement by Mr. Shaha (Nepal)*, General Assembly, 16th Session, Plenary Meetings, 1031st Meeting, 10 October 1961, New York, General Assembly Official Records, para. 99, p. 347; *Statement by Mr. DIALLO Tellé (Guinea)*, General Assembly, 16th Session, First Committee, 1203rd Meeting, 27 November 1961, New York, General Assembly Official Records, para. 34, p. 213; *Statement by Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (Pakistan)*, General Assembly, 16th Session, First Committee, 1205th Meeting, 28 November 1961, New York, General Assembly Official Records, para. 28, p. 222; *Statement by the Representative of Greece*, General Assembly, 16th Session, First Committee, 1205th Meeting, 28 November 1961, New York, General Assembly Official Records, para. 17, p. 221.
- ²² The ENCD constituted a reorganization of the negotiating functions of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament, which had been established in 1959 and in which East and West were represented in equal numbers. With the addition of eight non-aligned members, the ENCD held its first conference in 1962. The name of the ENCD (1962–1969) changed to Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) in 1969 as the membership was expanded to twenty-six nations, and further expanded to thirty-one in 1975. The CCD (1969–1978) became the Committee on Disarmament in 1979, and the Conference on Disarmament in 1984. *The United Nations and Disarmament — A Short History*, New York, United Nations, 1988, p. 3.
- ²³ G. Clark and L.B. Sohn, *World Peace Through World Law*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1960, p. 321.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–28.
- ²⁵ Clark and Sohn’s emphasis on world law and the need for a directly recruited international police force was echoed in the World Federalists’ publications. An example is the book published in 1959 by Everett Lee Millard, Executive Director of the Conference Upon Research and Education (CURE) in World Government and member of the Chicago Area Council, United World Federalists. E.L. Millard, *Freedom in a Federal World*, rev. 3rd ed., including Draft Revision of the UN Charter (first pub. 1959), New York, Dobbs Ferry/Oceana Publications Inc., 1964, p. 218.
- ²⁶ L.P. Bloomfield, *A World Effectively Controlled by the United Nations. A Preliminary Survey of One Form of Stable Military Environment*. Paper prepared for the Institute of Defense Analysis in support of a study to the Department of State under contract No. SCC 28270, unclassified, dated 24 February 1961, Special Studies Group, Washington, DC, IDA, 10 March 1962, 38p. (Study Memorandum No. 7.)
- ²⁷ R. Russell, *The United Nations and United States Security Policy*, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 1968, pp. 136–48; R. Russell, *United Nations Experience with Military Forces: Political and Legal Aspects*, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 1964, p. 1; F. Seyersted, *United Nations Forces*, reprinted from the *British Book of International Law*, 1961, p. 404.
- ²⁸ ACDA, *Blueprint for the Peace Race. Outline of the Basic Provisions of a Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World*, pub. no. 4, general series no. 3, Washington, DC, USGPO, released May 1962, 35p.
- ²⁹ R.E. Osgood, *Military Power in a Disarming World*, in Arnold Wolfers et al., *The United States in a Disarmed World. A Study of the US Outline for General and Complete Disarmament*, Washington, DC, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966, pp. 33–53.
- ³⁰ ACDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.
- ³¹ Those countries who participated most regularly in UN peacekeeping operations between 1946 and 1984 were Canada (twelve operations), Sweden (ten), Norway (nine), Italy (nine), Denmark (eight), Finland (eight), United States (eight), Australia (seven), Netherlands (six), Ireland (five), New Zealand (five) and India (five). E. Haas, *Collective Management of International Conflict, 1945–1984*, in *The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security*, Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987, p. 40. The total number of countries which participated in peacekeeping operations is fifty-four states. See also H. Wiseman, *The United Nations and International Peacekeeping: A Comparative Analysis*, in *The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security*, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
- ³² M. Tricaud, *L’Encyclique “Pacem in Terris” et la création d’une Autorité internationale*, *Revue Générale de Droit International Public*, Third Series, t. XXXVII, no. 1, January 1966, p. 118.
- ³³ Herbert Nicholas, prophetically drawing lessons from the operation, concluded: ‘Future Congos cannot be ignored simply because they were not dreamed of in the philosophy of San Francisco. This is not to say that the United Nations ought to get into every situation where internal breakdowns occur; if such crises can be settled without intervention, so much the better. But if they threaten international peace and security, the United Nations cannot side-step them on any narrowly legalistic ground.’ H.I. Nicholas, *UN Peace Forces and the Changing Globe*, *International Organization*, vol. 17, no. 2, Spring 1963, p. 336.

- ³⁴ R.C. Johansen and S.H. Mendlovitz, *The Role of Enforcement of Law in the Establishment of a New International Order: A Proposal for a Transnational Police Force*, *Alternatives*, 1980, pp. 311–13.
- ³⁵ Ernst Haas, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- ³⁶ Somalie — Un constat sévère de l'ancien Commandant des troupes de l'O.N.U., *Le Monde*, 20 January 1994, p. 5.
- ³⁷ N. Biegan, *We Can't Do Without It*, *Global Rights*, Autumn 1995, p. 7. Such a situation is also well summarized by F.T. Liu: 'There is no doubt that when involved in a complex civil war situation, where normal government structures have collapsed, a UN operation may need to use force or a credible threat of force to accomplish its mission. Under the present system, however, where operations must be set up hastily with troops provided by contributing nations on a purely volunteer basis, the UN is often unable to mount the force it needs. Few governments are willing to make their soldiers available for combat duty in conflicts that do not involve their national interest.' F.T. Liu, *Using Force: When and Where. The Job of the Blue Helmets*, *Work in Progress*, vol. 14, no. 3, June 1995, p. 4.
- ³⁸ C. Conetta and C. Knight, *Vital Force, A Proposal for the Overhaul of the UN Peace Operations System and for the Creation of a UN Legion*, Project on Defense Alternatives, Commonwealth Institute, October 1995, Research Monograph No. 4, 141p. See also C. Conetta and C. Knight, *Design for a 15,000-person UN Legion*, PDA, Commonwealth Institute, Cambridge, MA, 23 October 1995, 11p.
- ³⁹ C. Conetta and C. Knight, *Vital Force, A Proposal for the Overhaul of the UN Peace Operations System and for the Creation of a UN Legion*, p. v.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xii.
- ⁴¹ C. Kaysen and G.W. Rathjens, *Send In the Troops: A UN Foreign Legion*, *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 1, Winter 1997, p. 217.
- ⁴² Presented in a report entitled *Peace Operations by the United Nations: the Case for a Volunteer UN Military Force*, the Committee on International Security Studies of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, C. Kaysen and G.W. Rathjens' reflections were later summarized in an article published in *The Washington Quarterly*, *op. cit.*
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 218–19.
- ⁴⁴ For overview of the debate, see S.P. Kinloch, *Pragmatic or Utopian? A UN Permanent Military Volunteer Force*, *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 3, no. 4, Winter 1996, pp. 168–92 (special edition 'The UN, Peace, and Force').
- ⁴⁵ I.L. Claude Jr., *Swords into Plowshares. The Problems and Progress of International Organization*, New York, Random House, 1965, p. 242.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 259.