THE UNITED NATIONS AS CONFLICT MANAGER: A DISCUSSION ON GLOBAL COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Muzaffer Ercan YILMAZ[*]

ABSTRACT

This article aims to evaluate the United Nations (UN) as a conflict manager institution in terms of its strengths and shortcomings, devoting, in this respect, a particular attention to the notion of collective security. It is argued that in most cases, the UN, as the most legitimate global organization, has a utility in coping with large-scale conflicts between or within states. Yet many serious problems the UN has faced are also addressed, including primary reliance of states on self-help in the face of serious threats, no actual tradition of pooled sovereignty, as well problems regarding personnel, finance, training and language problems of UN forces. The study concludes that with common will and many reforms, outlined in the study, the UN system can be turned into a more effective conflict management machinery, but on the other hand, many restrictions limiting the efficiency of the UN are likely to continue.

Keywords: *United Nations, Collective Security, Conflict Management, Peacekeeping, Peace Building, Peace Enforcement.*

ÖZET

Bu makale, global ölçekte bir barış ve güvenlik örgütü olarak Birleşmiş Milletler'i (BM) güçlü ve zayıf yönleri itibariyle değerlendirmeyi, özellikle Örgütün kolektif güvenlik üzerine etkinliğini tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Makalede, gerek devletler arası, gerekse devlet içi geniş çaplı çatışmalarda BM'in yadsınamaz yararlarının bulunduğu gerçeğinin altı çizilmekle beraber, Örgütün karşı karşıya olduğu ciddi sorunlar da ayrıntılı bir biçimde irdelenmektedir. Çalışma, uluslararası ortak çaba ve reformlarla BM sisteminin daha etkin bir güvenlik mekanizmasına dönüştürülebileceği, ancak BM'in etkinliğini sınırlayan bazı sorunların da, sistemin yapısından ötürü devam edebileceği sonucuna ulaşmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Birleşmiş Milletler, Kolektif Güvenlik, Çatışma Yönetimi, Barış Gücü, Barışın Tesisi.*

Introduction

The roots of collective security go back to the early twentieth century efforts to create an entity resembling a world community. Collective security requires that countries combine their military forces in a coalition aimed at punishing acts of armed aggression. Such a coalition was usually understood to mean universal and permanent, in contrast to more limited and temporary military alliances. After the First World War, the League of Nations was established to make collective security real. Yet this organization was rather ineffective in stopping German and Italian dictators' aggressions in the 1930s. With the start of the Second World War in September 1939, the League of Nations completely lost its credibility, as it was unable to prevent the war.

The failure of the League of Nations led to the creation of another and better-structured global organization, the United Nations (UN), after Second World War. The term "United Nations" was coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and it was first used in the "Declaration by United Nations" of January 1, 1942, during the Second World War, when representatives of 26 countries pledged their governments to continue fighting together against the Axis Powers.

In 1945, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco at the UN Conference on International Organization to draw up the UN Charter. These delegates deliberated on the basis of proposals worked out by the representatives of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States at Dumbarton Oaks, United States, in August-October 1944. The Charter was signed on June 26, 1945 by the representatives of the 50 countries. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 member states.

The UN officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, when the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and a majority of other signatories.

As it is stated at the beginning of the Charter, in Article 1, the purposes of the UN are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity

with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;

2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

3. To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and

4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

Among these primary purposes, of course, maintaining peace is the top priority for the UN system and the notion of global collective security is the accepted means to that end. The purpose of this article is to discuss the efficacy of the UN's collective security system based mainly on the evaluation of UN peacekeeping forces and its evolution over the years. Starting with a brief summary of the Cold War years, post-Cold War developments, strengths and weaknesses of UN peacekeeping, as well as reform efforts of the UN system are talked about, in that order. Several observations are also addressed in concluding the study with respect to the possible future of the UN collective security machinery.

The Cold War Years

To ensure international order, multilateral peacekeeping, as we know, was created in the midst of a pair of horrendous crises in late 1956: Hungary, where the international community was impotent in the face of a brutal Soviet invasion, and Suez, where inventive diplomats devised a way to put lightly armed soldiers between two sides to guard a truce. Indeed, there was no provision for it in the UN Charter, but as a practical matter, an urgent need was identified and acted upon, establishing a new halfway house –Chapter 6 and a half- as it were –between the pacific settlement of disputes specified in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7's stalled provisions for collective military enforcement against aggression.

In general, during the Cold War, the UN's capacity to deal with disputes was sharply limited by the Soviet Union's distrust of the institution that it could

not fully control. Thus, for about two decades, the United States commanded a majority and was relatively open to the use of UN mechanisms –though not for its most sensitive actions, such as the Vietnam War, which were not winning majority support.

Nevertheless, UN peacekeeping was modestly successful throughout the Cold War. Lightly armed and politically neutral battalions contributed by member countries were placed, for example, between Arabs and Israelis, Congolese factions, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and Indians and Pakistanis. They were helpful in freezing many international conflicts, reducing some competitive interventions by neighboring or major powers, and isolating local conflicts from the Cold-War's ideological struggles (See, UN, 1990; Durch, 1993; Goulding, 1993).

Until the collapse of communism in the late 1980s, there were a total of 13 UN peacekeeping operations, most of which concerned conflicts that had arisen after European de-colonization. Many other issues, particularly East-West conflicts, on the other hand, were dealt with outside the UN because of the lack of cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

As they evolved from the 1950s to the 1980s, the traditional tasks of UN peacekeeping operations included interposing between conflicting parties and monitoring cease-fires. These tasks were usually carried out on the ground of three key principles: the advance consent of all of the fighting parties, impartiality, and non-use of force.

The principle of non-use of force was especially central to UN peacekeeping. In fact, more than half the UN peacekeeping operations before 1988 had consisted only of unarmed military observers and not counting situational exceptions, force was used only in cases of self-defense. But non-use of force, at times, made peacekeeping forces ineffective as well. For example, on Cyprus in 1974 and in Lebanon in 1982, the presence of UN peacekeeping could not prevent the breakdown of order and subsequent foreign invasions.

After the Cold War

The end of the Cold War, along with the success of enforcement in Operation Desert Storm, encouraged the leaders of major powers to believe that the time had come for more proactive use of multilateral machinery to deal with

emerging conflicts. Also, the post-Cold War era generally demanded an increasing need for stronger international peacekeeping forces. Especially, the collapse of two federal communist states in the early 1990s, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, resulted in many ethnic conflicts (in Bosnia, Armenia, and Georgia, to give a few examples) that called for active UN interventions. Then, the early 1990s brought controversial escalation from the accepted rules and premises of peacekeeping toward an uncharted gray zone variously labeled peace enforcement, humanitarian intervention, or "peacekeeping plus", downgrading the consent of conflicting parties and leaving greater room for the use of force.

However, the increasing militarization of UN peacekeeping forces gave rise to many serious problems. One is that any strong use of force in war-torn societies frequently involves killing or injuring civilians, as well as adversaries. When this happens, as it did in Somalia in the early 1990s, the UN, in general, and its leading members, in particular, risk being accused of acting in a colonial manner (See, Bellmy and Williams, 2004). Second, the use of force inevitably undermines the impartiality of peacekeeping forces. This, in turn, leads to a decline in the credibility of peacekeepers. Lastly, the UN system of decision making is not well geared to controlling major uses of force. When violent situations call for heavier tactics, disagreements tend to arise among the participants of peacekeepers regarding the degree of UN control. This was particularly the case during the Bosnian conflict in which the United Kingdom and France were reluctant to follow the UN authority on the ground.

Aside from increasing militarization, since the end of the Cold War, UN peacekeeping operations have also involved a great number of activities that have been either totally new or implemented on a much larger scale than before, such as:

- Monitoring and even running local elections, as in Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, and the Congo.
- Protecting certain areas as "safe areas" from adversary attacks so that people feel secure at least in these areas.
- Guarding the weapons surrendered by or taken from the parties in conflict.
- Ensuring the smooth delivery of humanitarian relief supplies during an ongoing conflict, as typically the case in Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia, and East Timor.

- Assisting in the reconstruction of state functions in war-torn societies, as in Bosnia- Herzegovina, El Salvador, the Congo, East Timor, and Liberia (See, Berdal, 2003; Howard, 2008).

Finally, UN peacekeeping operations numerically increased in the post-Cold War era to a great extent. While from 1948 to 1978, only 13 peacekeeping forces were set up, and in the following ten-year period, no new forces were established, from May 1988 to October 1993, a further 20 forces were created. As of February 2009, the number of UN peacekeeping operations has reached 63, 18 of which are still operating in the field, involving 114212 military and civilian personnel.[1]

While there cannot be any objection, in principle, to increasing missions and expanding tasks, UN peacekeeping operations have begun to suffer some fundamental weaknesses in the post-Cold War period.

First of all, there is a growing disparity between the capacity of the UN and demands of international peace and security. The UN Charter stipulates that to assist in maintaining peace and security around the world, all member states of the UN should make available to the Security Council necessary armed forces and facilities. Since the first peacekeeping operation in 1948, the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Palestine, about 130 nations have contributed military and civilian police personnel to peace operations. While detailed records of all personnel who have served in peacekeeping missions are not available, it is estimated that about one million soldiers, police officers and civilians have served under the UN flag in the last 56 years.[2]

Despite the large number of contributions, however, several of the world's most capable militaries, including the United States and British military, are heavily committed in a long-term struggle of defeating terrorism, thereby focusing on certain countries, such as Iran and Afghanistan. Their priority is not to be the "world police", but defending their people and national interests against terrorist actions, in particular, and revisionist movements, in general.

The contributions of other major powers, too, are rather limited. The Russian participating in peacekeeping personnel today is a little more than one percent, while about ten percent come from the European Union. China's

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[1] Source: http://www.un.org.peace/bnote010101.pdf (June 16, 2009).
[2] Source: http://www.un.org.peace (June 20, 2009).

contribution is approximately six percent, and Japan does not provide any personnel at all (See, UN Monthly Summary, 2008).

So the little and reluctant support of great powers make mostly developing nations as main contributors of peacekeeping personnel. In fact, as of February 2009, the ten main troop-contributing countries include Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Nepal, Ghana, Jordan, Rwanda, Uruguay, and Senegal, in that order. But these countries have generally limited means and qualified personnel. Thus, finding troop contingents for burgeoning peacekeeping operations still remains a major concern. A further challenge also involves meeting demands for the recruitment of thousands of skilled police officers and civilian staff with expertise in conflict resolution, justice, civil administration, economic development, and other specialized fields. UN peacekeeping must also secure other capabilities, such as tactical air support, field medical facilities, and movement control operations – resources provided by just willing member states.

Second, the budgeting of expanding peacekeeping operations is a continuing problem. At its peak right after the end of the Cold War, in the 1993-1994 period, the UN peacekeeping budget was $3.6 billion, which supported 17 peace operations involving as many as 70.000 personnel in the field and their logistic requirements. By the year 1998, the costs dropped to just under $1 billion. But with the resurgence of larger-scale operations, the costs for UN peacekeeping rose to $3 billion again in 2001-2002. The approved peacekeeping budget for the year 2007-2008 is $4.19 billion. Yet with the additional requirements of the new and recently expanded missions, that amount could grow by a further $1 billion.

Legally, all member states are obliged to pay their share of peacekeeping costs under a complex formula shaped mainly in accordance with their economic capacity. Yet in spite of this legal obligation, member states have been reluctant to pay. As of December 2008, they owe approximately $4.5 billion to the UN, the largest debtor being the United States ($846 million).[3]

Many proposals for UN reform deal with restructuring the UN's funding. Some suggest that the UN must seek alternative financing sources to fund its programs. Proposals include instituting a global tax on currency transactions, while others propose environmental taxes and taxes on arms-trade. However, member states responsible for the highest contributions are reluctant to reform the system, fearing that they would lose political leverage.

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[3] For further information about the financial problems of the UN, visit http://www.policy.org/finance (June 21, 2009).

Third, many of the expanded tasks of UN peacekeeping operations proved to be problematic in practice. For example, assisting democracy or certain governmental functions in states that has experienced civil wars depends upon local cooperation and when this cooperation is denied, serious problems begin regarding the operational success (See, Jarstad and Sisk, 2008; Howard, 2008). After all, peacekeepers are alien forces and they cannot function successfully without some local support. Likewise, the establishment of safe areas in war-torn countries threatened the impartiality of UN as peacekeeping units that utilized force to establish such areas and to protect them from external attacks (See, Fletiz, 2002; Fortna, 2004). Even in the case of humanitarian relief, the delivery of aids often produced a failure for the UN personnel to think deeper about the root causes of conflicts. In other words, focusing on satisfying immediate physical needs of people, like food and medical assistance, little or no attention has been devoted to the problems that created the need for aid and policies for tackling them (See Fortna, 2008).

A fourth problematic area is training and language. Troops, civilian police, and other personnel have been, and still are, of extraordinarily uneven quality. In spite of the UN's urgent need for such personnel, there must be higher standards that UN personnel are required to meet before they can be dispatched on a peacekeeping operation.

As for language, UN personnel are usually crippled by two kinds of language problems. First, different contingents in the same unit often have a difficulty in communicating with one another. Second, the contingents may not be able to communicate effectively with the local population. This could be particularly crippling when there is a need for intelligence, policing, and administration (See, Bland, 2004).

Fifth, in same cases, peacekeeping's tendency to continue indefinitely without real progress in peacemaking or peace building is another issue. In the Arab-Israeli conflict, there was a positive value in fielding a succession of UN peacekeeping missions trying to fence off the conflict to avoid escalation in the strategic Middle East, while efforts continued to seek solutions. Yet a periodically renewed UN mandate in Cyprus has lessened the pressure on the parties there to settle.

A final shortcoming of UN peacekeeping is that establishing these missions still necessities a consensus among permanent members of the Security Council. It was addressed above how peacekeeping was paralyzed by the veto power during the Cold War era. The end of the Cold War has resulted in a spirit of cooperation and excluded largely the former ideological clashes between the United States and Russia. But no one can guarantee that this trend will be holding. The fact that the future of UN peacekeeping will depend on major-power cooperation is a frightening reality and inevitably gives rise to serious doubts with respect to the prospects of peace missions.

These weaknesses, however, are not to argue that peacekeeping missions have no utility. In coping with frequent internal strives and occasional inter-state conflicts of the post-Cold War era, UN peacekeeping is an indispensable tool. Its legitimacy and universality are unique, acting on behalf of 192 member states. And compared to the cost of war, in both financial and human terms, peacekeeping is the "cheap" alternative in the process of conflict resolution. Moreover, UN peacekeeping can open doors which might otherwise remain closed to efforts in peacemaking and peace-building, to secure lasting peace (See, Yılmaz, 2005).

Yet, on the other hand, as the above arguments reveal, the problems UN peacekeeping faces today confirm that a general and uniform global system of collective security is still not imminent. UN peacekeeping is patchy, *ad hoc*, and contingent upon the interests and cooperation of major states, while it is also more appropriate in some situations than in others.

In Cases of Cross-Border Military Aggression

Historical records reveal that with the exception of North Korea's invasion of South Korea in 1950, the global system failed to enforce its own rules when confronted with cross-border military aggression. The UN repeatedly failed to respond to cross-border armed attacks, such as Egypt, Syria, and Jordan against Israel; Israel against Lebanon; Turkey in Cyprus;[4] North Vietnam against its

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[4] The Turkish military intervention of 1974 was triggered by the Greece-supported coup on the Greek Cypriot side aimed at realizing *enosis* (union with Greece). The other essential factors leading Turkey to use military force in Cyprus were: The Turkish Cypriots' long-lasting sufferings after the constitutional breakdown of 1963, confusion in US foreign policy formulation and implementation, brought on by the Watergate scandal, and Turkey's determination to prevent *enosis*. Turkey justified its action based on its guarantor-state status, claiming, arguably, that it was trying to restore the constitutional order of Cyprus (See, Mallinson, 2009: 75-86).

neighbors; Algeria and Morocco in Western Sahara; China in India and Vietnam; South Africa on its borders; the Soviet Union in Afghanistan; Iraq in Iran; Libya in Chad; Iran in the Gulf islands; and Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas. Even the war against North Korea was neither universal, nor technically even Chapter 7 enforcement, since the Soviet Union walked out of the Security Council over the issue of Chinese representation. A 16-nation coalition under the UN banner, led by the United States as the Security Council's "executive agent", achieved the limited objective of expelling the aggressor.

What about sanctions? Under the UN Charter's Chapter 7, nonmilitary sanctions were always as a first step to secure compliance. Such measures included trade, arms, and financial embargos; expulsion from international organizations and from cultural/sports events; suspension of technical assistance; severance of postal and communication services; and war crime indictments.

Sanctions by the UN have been increasingly invoked but with mixed results. To give a few examples, economic sanctions on Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) in 1965 for its unilateral break-away from the United Kingdom were ineffective (See, Kapungu, 1973). A mandatory arms embargo against South Africa for *apartheid* in 1977 was more influential, for it was generally observed by the major trading powers and undergirded by bilateral economic sanctions (See, Levy, 1999). Arms embargoes voted on Rwanda, parts of Angola, Somalia, and Libya in the 1990s had some curbing effects on these countries (See, Wallensteen and Staibano, 2005). The leaky sanctions against Serbia for backing the murderous conquests of its Bosnian brethren appeared to be somewhat effective in temporarily transforming the criminally expansionist Milosevic into partner in peacekeeping Milosevic. More recent arms embargos on Liberia, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan have been, in general, effective in limiting the capacity of fighting groups, though they were not sufficient to end the civil wars in these countries.

A study by the Institute of International Economics reveals that if sanctions seek to reverse an aggression or disable an outlaw state's military potential, the chances of success are low. The odds improve when the goals are modest, the target is small and highly dependent on the outside, and an active internal opposition exists. In order to be effective, sanctions should be universal, with compensation provided for those otherwise tempted to cheat, along with positive incentives for the violator to behave (Quoted from Bloomfield and Moulton, 1997, p. 87).

Perhaps the main problem with sanctions is that the burden of them falls actually on the innocent, as they are imposed on abstractions as a form of collective punishment, implied probation, hoped-for deterrence. A more humane approach would punish the criminal leadership directly, with innovative sanctions targeted on leadership and its assets. But in most conflict settings, this choice is neither practical, nor realistic as it is very difficult to set apart the leadership from the public.

A serious trouble arose right after the end of the Cold War when peacekeeping by nonfighting units encountered aggressive behavior and began to spill over into what looked like enforcement, which means applying sanctions (under UN Charter, Chapter 7), and ultimately using force if necessary to punish aggressors and other transgressors of the community's ground rules. For a while, that seemed a logical feature of the post-Cold War era, with the UN implementing a new sort of "common law" to cope forcibly if necessary with humanitarian crises brought on by internal strife. Yet peacekeeping's rules of engagement limited the UN units to self-defense, so sometimes the peacekeepers and aid-deliverers have been unable to protect either civilian populations or themselves.

The transition from the accepted function of peacekeeping to the humanitarian enforcement, whether to end famine or to protect people from civil war or anarchy, might have worked if the nations of the world had constituted a genuine community, in the sense of shared values and the usual powers of policing, taxation, and the rest. However, there was no agreement on such increased powers for the UN. Even if the UN structures were to be reformed, it cannot be overlooked that the Security Council's decisions are decisions by the major governments, primarily the United States.

Efforts to Reform of the UN

Nevertheless, to enhance the UN's effectiveness in the 21st Century, there have been some reform efforts in recent years. At the September 2005 World Summit, for example, world leaders affirmed their commitment to a strengthened UN with enhanced authority and capacity to effectively and rapidly respond to the full range of global challenges of our time. It was also confirmed that with the organization engaged with a range of pressing global issues in every part of the

world, a renewed, revitalized and more responsive UN was needed more than ever.[5]

Afterwards, in January 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon outlined the areas the UN needs to advance if it is to meet the challenges facing the member states and their peoples in the 21st Century. In this regard, he stressed that in areas like the environment, public health and human security, the world is facing threats and challenges that respect no boundaries. Thus, international cooperation is needed, along with the UN's senior officials and staff, to meet the challenges in the new century.[6]

But the main focus of the reform efforts was the area of collective security. The General Assembly approved the Secretary-General's proposal to re-structure the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in June 2007, creating a Department of Field Support (DFS) to consolidate the support functions of recruitment for field personnel, including senior appointments, procurement and financial management. DSF's establishment is hoped to ensure more effective and accountable management of resources and improved responsiveness to field support requirements.[7]

As peacekeeping continues to expand, the DPKO was also decided to focus more on providing effective mission management, strategic planning, and policy guidance. To that end, key sectors within DPKO, such as Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Military Affairs and Police were all strengthened as well. Through the establishment of Integrated Operational Teams, the two departments are expected to work as one to ensure maximum efficiency, promote both accountability and transparency, and maintain clear reporting lines to facilitate the overall harmonization of efforts.

The reform efforts also targeted preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. In this respect, it was stressed that the UN needed to strengthen its capacity not only to stabilize situations through the deployment of forces after peace agreements are reached, but also to prevent and resolve conflict through political means. The Secretary-General wanted to better equip and better position the UN

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[5] For further information, visit http://www.un.org/summit2005 (June 23, 2009).
[6] For further information, visit http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?News_ID=25214_&Cr=algiers&Cr1=staff&Kw1=Secretary-General+&Kw2=&Kw3(June 23, 2009).
[7] For further information, visit http://www.un.org/reform/peace_security.shtml#1(June 24, 2009).

to prevent and resolve conflicts at an early stage, before they escalate into larger and costlier tragedies.

To this end, the Secretary-General unveiled in November 2007 a proposal to strengthen and restructure the Department of Political Affairs, to transform it into a more mobile and field-oriented structure, allowing for more proactive and effective use of the tools of preventive diplomacy, including mediation and the good offices of the Secretary-General. Some of the elements of the restructuring plan included:

- Strengthened regional affairs desks;
- Greater mobility to deploy in areas of potential conflict;
- Enhanced management and oversight capacity of current field operations;
- Gradual establishment, in close consultation with member states, of regional offices that can work closely with governments and regional organizations on conflict prevention and resolution;
- Improved capacity to work with governments to identify potential problems before they spread and to respond with timely initiatives.[8]

A Mediation Support Unit within the Department of Political Affairs is already working with regional desks to assist UN peace envoys in the field as they try to prevent and resolve conflicts. A full-time UN "stand-by" mediation team became operational in March 2008, and will provide urgent expert advice to mediation efforts around the world.

In order to assist countries emerging from conflict and to prevent them sliding back into instability or war, the Peacebuilding Commission, its Support Office, and the Peacebuilding Fund were established based on the acceptance of member states at the 2005 World Summit, reflecting the UN's belief that peacebuilding is a solid way to consolidate and advance long-term stability.

Two countries currently under consideration by the Peacebuilding Commission, Burundi and Sierra Leone, have identified priority areas, such as employment creation, good governance, the rule of law, democracy consolidation, and security sector reform. In December 2007, Guinea-Bissau became the third country to be placed on the Peacebuilding Commission agenda with backing from the Security Council.

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[8] For further information, visit http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2007/071106_ Pascoe.doc. htm (June 25, 2009).

The third area of reform efforts was struggling with terrorism. While terrorism has been on the agenda of the UN for decades, in September 2006, for the first time in UN history, all UN member states agreed on a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism, adopting, in this regard, by consensus in the General Assembly the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

This strategy spells out concrete measures for member states to take individually, as well as collectively, to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, prevent and combat terrorism, and strengthen their individual and collective capacity to do so. The strategy calls for member states to work with the UN system to implement the provisions of the plan of action contained in the strategy, and at the same time, calls for UN system entities to assist member states in their efforts.[9]

UN departments, programs, funds and agencies have been taking actions in a number of areas in line with the strategy both in their individual capacity and through joint efforts in the framework of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF). The CTITF, which consists of 24 UN system entities, is currently working with member states to facilitate implementation of the strategy in areas where UN system entities can add value.

Conclusion

As these efforts suggest, the post-Cold War era has been regarded as a time of constructive reforms in the UN system. No doubt, these reforms have been well-intended, and in general, modestly successful in empowering the UN system of collective security. On the other hand, both the transition from classical peacekeeping to the humanitarian enforcement and expansion of peacekeeping duties turned the UN into a more effective conflict management machinery. Today, UN peacekeeping is a proven tool for minimizing conflict around the globe. However, the post-Cold War experiences also suggest that the UN system of collective security is still patchy, *ad hoc*, and contingent upon the interests of major states.

It is understandable, at the international level, that consistent law enforcement toward all offensive behavior between and within states cannot reasonably be expected in our kind of world. Indeed, as with the rest of human life, consistency cannot always be the litmus test for success. It is not cynical but

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[9] For further information, visit http://www.un.org/terrorism (June 25, 2009).

realistic to acknowledge that the world is fortunate if the large matters (blatant aggression, mass famine) are tackled even while some lesser crimes go unpunished.

Yet it is hard to understand why the UN Security Council was active in enforcing order in some cases, but not in others. Why was it eager to restore order in Somalia but not in Bosnia, to defend Kuwait but not Azerbaijan and Georgia? Perhaps the answer still lies in power politics shaped deeply by the interests of great powers. For example, the permanent membership of Russia in the UN Security Council has enabled it to exercise its interest-based policies against Georgia and Azerbaijan in the region of Caucasus, even if such policies violate international law.

Some believe that empowering the UN to take independent action in new crises can remedy the situation. A standing UN force might make the law enforcement process more automatic. Realistically, however, such a force, even with the great power veto over its use, is not a likely prospect in the aftermath of increasing intra-state conflicts in the post-Cold War era.

The emerging conclusion from the above arguments is that although in most conflict settings, the UN has an undeniable positive role to play, the existing UN system suffers from some major weaknesses. In their local settings, people know what compliance and enforcement mean, knowing also the cost of breaking the law. At the international level, on the other hand, world society is still a partial and imperfect community that lacks the essential qualities of world government. The UN stimulates government, but cannot really act like one. It is for sure that peace, security, and welfare of all nations logically require improved arrangements for international governance, but the limiting realities cannot be denied: decentralized power centers, fragments of organization, primary reliance on self-help in the face of serious threats, and above all, no real tradition of pooled sovereignty. These limitations are likely to go on.

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