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The Universal Soldier
An argument against the establishment of an integrated United Nations Standing Force.

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ABSTRACT

The United Nations has strived to maintain and enforce the principles as outlined in its Charter by struggling to resolve international conflict. As the world order shifts and parts of the world become increasingly unstable, additional peace enforcement missions are required. These new peace enforcement missions are now more dangerous, less predictable and require a more rapid reaction if lives are to be saved and nation states are to survive. These changes have once again put the United Nations method of organizing, deploying and establishing peace support operations in the critical eye. It has been suggested that the international community support the creation of a United Nations Legion. A force that would be financed, recruited, trained, equipped and commanded by the United Nations.

This paper examines whether the international community can establish an effective standing integrated military force for United Nation operations. It concludes that the major obstacles to establishing such a force are limited international political will, unwillingness of nations to finance the force as well as seemingly unsolvable problems of command and control, recruiting and training of the force.

"Our mission is much more important than the national interests of any one country."[1],
General M Baril

Introduction

In 1994, the world watched in horror and disbelief at the situation in Rwanda. The

Secretary General of the United Nations at the time, Boutros-Boutros-Ghali, held a press

conference to discuss the events in Rwanda following the assassination of the presidents of

Burundi and Rwanda on April 6 of that same year. During the press conference, the Secretary

General admitted that the United Nations was unable to send troops into the area in order to stop

the violence. It was estimated that by the time the press conference ended approximately

200,000 people had been slaughtered since the start of the civil war, seven weeks earlier.[2] It was

not for another five months into the civil war that a multinational contingent of some 500 African

along with 2500 French troops entered southwestern Rwanda, but it was a case of much too little,

much too late.[3] By then, over five hundred thousand Rwandans had been killed and another 3

million had fled to nearby countries.[4] This was indeed an abysmal response to a life-threatening

crisis by the international community and by extension to the United Nations. It is difficult to

accept that the international community simply stood by and let this tragedy unfold. It is even

harder to believe that the response, as weak as it was, took over seven months to organize and

deploy. The international community had indeed failed to live up to the spirit of Article 1 of the

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[1] General Maurice Baril held the position of Military Advisor to the Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali of the United Nations from July 1992 until the summer of 1995. Jocelyn Coulon, *Soldiers of Diplomacy: The United Nations, Peacekeeping, and the New World Order*, trans Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 13.

[2] *Ibid*, 169.

[3] *Ibid*, 171.

[4] *Ibid*, 171.

United Nations Charter, which states in part that the United Nations is "…to achieve

international cooperation in solving international problems of economic, social, cultural and

humanitarian character…."[5]

One can only imagine that when the United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco

on June 26, 1945 that the collective body of the United Nations would in the future, standby

while the very essence of the Charter was being so casually dismissed.[6] It has been argued that

one of the main reasons that the Rwanda situation was allowed to deteriorate was that there was,

and still is, no mechanism to rapidly deploy a robust United Nations force in times of crisis.[7] A

force that could prevent human suffering, provide security to threatened populations or stem the

tide of war, internal strife and genocide. According to Article 43 of the United Nations Charter,

> All members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of
> international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on
> its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces…for the
> purposes of maintaining international peace and security.[8]

However, as the events in Rwanda have demonstrated the international will and resolve and

support Article 43 is not always steadfast, and at times is slow in emerging.

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[5] Leland M Goodrich, Edvard Hambro and Anne Patricia Simons, *Charter of the United Nations Commentary and Documents,* 3rd and revised ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969) 25.

[6] *Ibid*, 1.

[7] Lutz Unterseher, "Intervention Reconsidered: Reconciling Military Action With Political Stability," *Project on Defense Alternatives*, September 1999, [journal on-line]; available from htpp://www.comw.org/pda/9909inter.htpl accessed 29 January 2003.

[8] Leland M Goodrich, Edvard Hambro and Anne Patricia Simons, *Charter of the United Nation …,*317.

Aim

This paper will examine whether the international community can establish an effective

standing integrated military force for United Nation operations. It will not deal with issues of

force size, composition or structure as there has been enough literature written on this already.[9]

Instead, this paper will comment on the history of the establishment of such a force, and examine

the issues of political will, financial feasibility, command and control, recruiting and training

such a force.

The Charter and the United Nations Security Council

The rasion d'etre of the United Nations is entrenched in the first few sentences of the

Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, which states:

> We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from
> the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought sorrow to mankind, and to
> reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person,
> in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small….[10]

The wording of the preamble, as well as the concept of the United Nations and its precursor, the

League of Nations had its origins in the West. This western centric influence was embedded

during the Dumbarton Oaks proposal whereby an eleven state Security Council with five

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[9] For a detailed description on possible force size, structure, composition and weapons system requirements see the Project on Defense Alternatives Research Monograph 4, 1 October 1995 by Carl Conetta and Charles Knight, *A Proposal for the Overhaul of the United Nations Peace Operations System and for the Creation of a United Nations Legion*, (Massachusetts: Commonwealth Institute Cambridge, 1995).

[10] Leland M Goodrich, Edvard Hambro and Anne Patricia Simons, *Charter of the United Nation …*,1.

permanent members (P5) was proposed and established.[11] The P5 nations consisted of the

Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of

Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.[12] All 11 members were

given the right to vote on all resolutions, but only the P5 were allowed to vote, as well as veto all

matters.[13] In essence, the real power was to be held by the P5, this power is encapsulated with

the ability to veto any United Nations Security Council Resolution by any one of the P5.[14]

Hence, the real power was held by the P5, a majority of which represented the western world.

All nations that seek membership to the United Nations are expected to accept, respect

and abide by the United Nations Charter and accept certain obligations as outlined in the

Charter.[15] Membership, however, does not mean that nations are expected to give up their

sovereignty or their freedom to express national opinions and views. In fact, the United Nations

by nature, is a collective of different countries, cultures, religions and ideologies, all who want

their voices heard, whilst striving for a better international community. Countries do not join the

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[11] Evan Luard, *A History of the United Nations Volume 1: The Years of Western Domination, 1945-1955*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982), 51.

[12] Leland M Goodrich, Edvard Hambro and Anne Patricia Simons, *Charter of the United Nations…,*192.

[13] *Ibid*, 194.

[14] The veto has been used by the Security Council for a total of over 279 times since the establishment of the United Nations up until 1990, since then the veto has had very limited use. The limited use of the veto has been accredited to the end of the cold war. John Hillen, *Blue Helmets: The Strategy of United Nations Military Operations*, (Washington: Brassey's, 1998), 146.

[15] Leland M Goodrich, Edvard Hambro and Anne Patricia Simons, *Charter of the United Nations…,*91.

United Nations for purely altruistic reasons. Nations join for self serving purposes, for the

United Nations allows them to voice their opinions, provide the forum to air their grievances,

weld soft power and gain a tangible return.[16] By enlarge; member nations rely heavily on the

United Nations for advancement of their national interests and in support of their national

policies.[17]

One of the primary reasons that nations join the United Nations is for political stability or

more succinctly put, to maintain security and sovereignty. Nation states, much like individuals

find solidarity in groups. As such, a collective of nations, even if not all of the same opinion, has

the net effect of providing both comfort and stability. Hence, the reason for the preponderance

of organizations such as; the Organization of American States, the League of Arab States, the

European Union, the Western European Union Organization of African States and the North

Atlantic Treaty Organisation. All of these organizations are regional in nature and were formed

for political, economic or security reasons. The primary difference between these organizations

and the United Nations is two fold. Firstly, the United Nations is not focused on any regional

based economic or security agreements. Secondly and most importantly, is that the United

Nations is a collective of over 189 nations, all with different capabilities, ideas and political

systems within the international stage. It is this collective that not only provides the strength of

[16] *Ibid*, 16.

[17] *Ibid*, 88.

the United Nations, but it also acts as its Achilles heal. Disagreements, fractions and disputes as well as outright confrontation are at times the norm at the United Nations.[18] A war of words that encapsulates diplomacy, is in fact what the United Nations was established to nurture. If words can be the tools used to reach an end state without resorting to violent and destructive confrontation then the process, although somewhat convoluted, can be considered effective in the international political arena. There are, however, situations when words and good intentions are no longer sufficient. This is a time when actions must be taken as envisioned in the United Nations Charter.

Article 1 of the United Nations Charter states that the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security and to that end to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of the threat to peace.[19] In 1992, in his 'Agenda for Peace', Secretary General Boutros-Boutros-Ghali outlined four broad categories that could help eliminate the threat to peace or at least re-stabilize a region that was in conflict and turmoil. He firmly believed that the United Nations could support the peace process by: preventative democracy, in which the hostile parties form an agreement prior to an armed conflict, by peacemaking, through diplomacy after a conflict has started there by reducing the intensity of the conflict, by peacekeeping, that is the physical separation of the embattled parties and finally, by fostering

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[18] *Ibid*, viii.

[19] *Ibid*, 25.

peace through building of structures both physical and systems for nations during pre or post

conflict situations.[20]

The First United Nations Force Attempt

Of the four pillars espoused by Boutros-Boutros-Ghali, the most controversial throughout

the life of the United Nations has been the Peacekeeping pillar. This controversy was born

during 1947 when the Military Staff Committee established a sub-committee to study if the

United Nations should establish a rapid reaction and logistically supported force that could be

used in a pre-emptive fashion. The force planning was still in its infancy when strong P5

disagreements arose. For example, the Soviet Union wanted identical contributions from each

nation and wanted forces only to be stationed in home territory, whilst France and China wanted

the ability to hold back forces in case of a national emergency.[21] Nonetheless, by May 1947 the

initial recommendation was for a force consisting of an air component of 600 bombers, 400

fighters, and 200 other airframes, a naval component of 2 battle ships, 4 carriers, 6 cruisers, 24

destroyers, 48 frigates, 24 minesweepers, 12 submarines as well as assault lift for 2 land

brigades, and a land component of between 8 to 12 divisions.[22] However, because of the

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[20] John C. Polanyi "From Peacekeeping to Peace Making" in *United Nations Reform Looking Ahead After Fifty Years,*. eds. Eric Fawcett and Hanna Newcombe (Toronto: University of Toronto 1995), 124-125.

[21] Eric Grove, "UN Armed Forces and the Military Staff Committee," *International Security* 17.4 (Spring 1993),178.

[22] By 1947 the various proposals indicated that the force could increase to 750 bombers, 500 fighters, 25 other airframes, 3 battle ships, 6 carriers, 12 cruisers, 33 destroyers, 64 frigates, 24 minesweepers, 14 submarines, assault lift for 4 brigade groups, 15 army divisions (375k to 450k troops) Felicity Hill "*The Military Staff Committee: A Possible Future in United Nations Peace Operations*" Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

plummeting temperatures of the cold war and the unfortunate accompanying political rivalries,

the force never matured past the planning stages and the proposal died, along with the usefulness

of the Military Staff Committee. The initial attempt failed, but a glimmer of hope emerged when

the United States attempted to revitalize the move to establish a United Nations controlled force

to undertake the mission(s) as envisioned in the United Nations Charter.

The United States proposed a 'peace force' that could be assigned under either the

General Assembly or the Security Council. It recommended that members of the United

Nations:

> [m]aintain within each of its national armed forces elements so trained, organized and equipped that each nation could promptly be made available…for service as a United Nations unit or units upon recommendation by the Security Council or General Assembly….[23]

The idea which was initially known as the Acheson plan and then was renamed as the "Uniting

for Peace Plan" was similar to what was proposed in 1947 but with an obligation difference.[24]

Countries would hold portions of their forces in readiness at their own discretion in support of

either General Assembly or Security Council requirements. Cooperation was strictly voluntary

yet a certain amount of moral persuasion would be applied, but each nation could refuse, and

furthermore no nation could be made to send forces to war against its will or when it was against

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[journal on-line] available from http://globalpolicy.org/sedurity/peacekpg/reform/2001/mcs.htm accessed 1 February 2003,3.

[23] William R Frye, *A United Nations Peace Force*, (New York: Oceana Publications Inc., 1957), 58.

[24] *Ibid*, 59.

its national interests. This was a drastic shift from the earlier Military Staff Committee proposal.

A country could pledge forces, but never intend to actually send troops, or send troops only when

it was in its national interest. One of the outcomes of the discussions and the political back room

maneuvering was that for the first time, there was made mention of using another collective

security organization under the auspices of the United Nations. In fact, the United States stated

that if the United States were to go to war in the NATO arena, "she would be happy to let

themselves be called United Nations troops."[25] One of the reasons that this proposal did not

succeed was that the Soviets did not relish the fact that this force could come under the control of

the General Assembly. The Soviets believed the United States and the western alliance had

dominance in the General Assembly and the Soviet Union would not be able to use the power of

the veto, and as a result, the proposal was eliminated.[26]

It is this constant battle between the need for some type of rapid reaction force to

intervene at the onset of a conflict and the diverging interest of the nations that are members of

the United Nations that has stifled each plan or concept to establish a rapid deployment force

under their control. All these initial plans were deemed too complex for a variety of reasons

including the cold war friction.

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[25] *Ibid,* 59.

[26] *Ibid*, 63.

The Changing Face of Peace Support Operations

The standard United Nations force missions leading up to the end cold war were either military observer missions such as the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, or Charter V traditional peacekeeping missions such as United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and United Nations Emergency Force.[27] Both the observer missions and the peacekeeping missions were small in scope and limited in danger.[28] Current United Nations missions have changed into what John Hillen, in his book *Blue Helmets* terms 'Second-Generation' peacekeeping missions, where these missions differ from traditional missions in two respects. Firstly, they are deployed in different and less familiar environments where the conflict is very unstable and a virtual state of war exists, normally between two or more sectarian or ethnic groups and where no clear authoritative leaders exist.[29] Secondly, is that the military aspect is but one factor in the multifunctional mission. The armed presence is intertwined with Non Governmental Organizations, humanitarian aid, and involves the supervision of governmental functions, the repatriation of large numbers of the population and the provision of safe areas.[30] Hence, the second-generation missions are much more complex and come with a

[27] Military Division Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "*United Nation PeacekeepingOperations-Background Note*," United Nations web site, available from http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home/shtml accessed 1 September 2002, 2.

[28] United Nations statistics indicate that between 1948 and 1990 there were 826 fatalities, but between 1991 and 2002 there were 975 fatalities. The increase in fatalities were a result of larger missions, increase deployments and a higher rate of fatalities due to hostile acts vice accidents or illness. Military Division Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "*United Nation Peacekeeping Operations-Background Note*," United Nations web site, available from http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/fatalities/mission_abbr.html accessed 24 October 2002.

[29] John Hillen, *Blue Helmets: The Strategy ...,* 141-142.

[30] *Ibid*, 141.

higher level of risk to the peacekeepers. Sovereign nations are less willing to risk the lives of their soldiers and their reputations to provide deployment forces to such missions when the probability of failure is high and the credibility of the contributing nation and the United Nations is at stake.

If nations are not willing to rapidly deploy troops into the second-generation peacekeeping trouble spots around the world, what then is the solution? As in any problem, there are usually a number of solutions, and they range from the standard status quo, to establishing a force ready list such as the current United Nations Standby Arrangements System, to establishing a permanent United Nations Military Force. Each of these options has its proponents, opponents, merits, failings and different force structure compositions. However, the most controversial to date is that of the establishment of what many have referred to as the United Nations Legion, or standing force. Since the Bahimi Report released in August 2002 summed up this option by stating that "[n]o amount of good intentions can substitute for the fundamental ability to project credible force if complex peacekeeping, in particular, is to succeed."[31]

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[31] A/55/305-S/2000/809 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, General Assembly Fifty-fifth session, United Nations, 21 August 2000, viii.

<u>A United Nations Legion (A Standing Force)</u>

The hotly discussed but seldom-actioned alternative is that of a standing force, or as is sometimes referred to as a United Nations Legion.[32] The concept for the legion is that it would be comprised of peacekeepers from various countries serving under the United Nations flag and under United Nations command and control. Their loyalties would be to the United Nations and the international community as opposed to any one country or regional organization. Command and control, training, personnel and equipment would be provided and supplied by the United Nations. The force would train together, be based at United Nations' facilities and in theory would be ready to deploy a force for

> "…traditional' peacekeeping operations within 30 days of the adoption of a Security Council resolution, and complex peacekeeping operations within 90 days. In either case a mission headquarters would be deployed and functioning within 15 days."[33]

The use or establishment of such a force is not to advocate establishing a massive force capable of dealing with every conceivable situation endangering international security, but rather a force to deal with what would be the most pressing, or in some cases like Rwanda, the most time critical situations or circumstances.[34] There would still be a need for the traditional method of

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[32] May advocates as well as scholars and United Nations members dislike the term legion as it imparts the images of the French Foreign Legion. The term is used here to denote that the legion as a "foreign body of volunteers" referring to the concept that the United Nations Legion would be make up of citizens of all countries, on a volunteer basis. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, seventh edition.

[33] According to the Brahimi Report, this is what the United Nations defines as "rapid and effective deployment" for United Nations peace keeping operations. A/55/305-S/2000/809 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, General Assembly Fifty-fifth session, United Nations, 21 August 2000, 15.

[34] Walter J. Williams Jr, *Intergovernmental Military Forces and World Public Order*. (New York: Oceana Publications Inc., 1971), 409.

asking member countries to provide troops for other missions, as this force would not necessarily

be large enough to conduct all of the worldwide missions nor would it be able to maintain and

sustain a mission for a long duration. The legion would follow the principle that military action

to stop or prevent fighting must occur early. Therefore, the legion would have sufficient strength

to carry out what it is mandated to do, and thus "Early in Strength" must therefore be the first

principle followed.[35]

Initially, the legion appears to meet all of the requirements that the international

community would want in a United Nations force. It would be a military mission capable force

suitable for a continuum of United Nations missions with the emphasis on second-generation

peacekeeping missions. In addition, it would have coordinated common training, have a

structured command and control system, and comprise of a number of like-minded professional

soldiers from countries within the United Nations community. The legion would also meet the

criteria of being effectively and rapidly deployed. Why then has this legion force structure not

been adopted as yet by the United Nations?

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[35] Major General John A. MacInnis, "Preparing for Peace in the 21st Century" in *Strengthening the United Nations and Enhancing War Prevention*, ed. John Norton Moore and Alex Morrison (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2000), 56.

There are a number of minor factors that work against the establishment of a legion, yet the major obstacles in the way of a United Nations legion are the highly charged aspects of political will, financial feasibility, command and control and force recruiting and training.

Political Will

Political will refers to the need for member states to become seriously committed to the objective of ensuring global security and peace in areas of unrest. One of the major problems facing the United Nations is garnering enough political will from member states to directly support peace operations. Without the support of member states, and their recognition that peace support operations and stability operations worldwide are a vital task for the United Nations, these operations will be doomed to failure. Bosnia and Rwanda were classic cases for Peace-enforcement operations but where tragically, international resolve was lacking. [36] There was little desire by nation states to have their soldiers involved in a conflict where there was no direct benefit for the troop sending countries, especially if there was a risk that national soldiers would return home as 'casualties of peace.'

The major political opposition to a legion concept has been longstanding and when in 1948 Secretary General Lie put forward a similar proposal the member states of the United Nations were concerned that the legion would be controlled by the Security Council and thus by

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[36] John C. Polanyi "From Peacekeeping to Peace Making…,126.

extension, the western powers.[37] The fear was that the legion would end up as an instrument of

the super powers through the Security Council and could be utilized by the Security Council for

less than philanthropic reasons. This concern, either real or imagined could be avoided if the

decision to deploy the legion would rest with both a Security Council and a General Assembly

vote. The Security Council could then recommend the deployment and the General Assembly

would sanction and finance the deployment. Therein, it would be a true decision of the United

Nations not just a select 15 members of the Security Council or the P5.[38]

Greater political will could be obtained and maintained if the international community

had a United Nations Legion to send into potential hostile areas. The legion, in theory, may in

fact promote political will because the realities of doing nothing or mission failure could be

diluted and placed on the international community as a whole as opposed to a few countries that

participate. Nation state citizens may be less affected to hear that a United Nations Legionnaire

from Germany was killed in action as opposed to a serving German Army soldier. The end state

is the same, but the message is somewhat blunted, subdued, and less of a national interest story.

This severing of purely national ties may provide for a higher level of political will to support a

truly international force. In addition the game of international politics and the desire for nations

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[37] William R Frye, *A United Nations Peace Force…*,63.

[38] In 1965 the size of the Security Council was changed from 11 to 15 in order better to reflect the increased size of the United Nations membership. Leland M Goodrich, Edvard Hambro and Anne Patricia Simons, *Charter of the United Nations…*,195.

to look good and skirt blame, may provide additional impetus for the legion concept as it may

allow for the apportionment of blame for a mission that goes wrong to land squarely on the

shoulders of the United Nations. For example, the tragedy of the safe area(s) of Sebrenica,

where the Dutch contingent of UNPROFOR were powerless to stop the slaughter of 7,000

unarmed Muslim

their share of peacekeeping costs under a formula that they themselves agree upon and

continually revise.[40] Given the increased costs, it is little wonder that at the end of the year 2000;

over $2.5 billion was due in current and back peacekeeping dues by member states.[41]   These

arrears are debilitating for current and future peace operations. Quite often, the United Nations

is unable to pay troop-contributing nations the agreed-upon rate for their contribution to a

mission. This makes it all the more difficult to secure troops for the next mission, or to purchase

equipment for rapid deployment of troops to missions. The United Nations frequently juggles

money from one account to another to pay for basic needs such as electricity bills, again because

of shortfalls caused by member states failing to pay legally obligated dues.[42] This funding issue

is bound to get worse as nations strive to cut their own military funding levels whilst the number,

size and scope of United Nations missions are on the rise. Today "the members are not prepared

to give the United Nations a blank check to use their Armed forces in unspecified future

[peacekeeping] operations. Nor are they prepared to give the United Nations funds to maintain

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[40] The scale of assessment for 2001-2001 recommended that the maximum percentage that any one state must contribute towards the regular budget of the United Nations at 22 percent—down from 25 percent for 2000. The Committee recommended and the Assembly approved a peacekeeping scale based on the regular budget scale, but placing Member States in one of 10 different categories, based on per capita income. The categories range from least developed countries, who receive a discount on their regular contributions, to the permanent members of the Security Council, who pay a premium over their regular assessment to make up for the discounts. Press Release GA/9851 23 December 2000, General Assembly President Says Millennium Summit Declaration 'One of The Most Important Documents Of Our Time' available from United Nations web site http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/ga9851.doc.html accessed 25 March, 2002.

[41] Press release GA/AB 3395 17 October 2000, Non –Payment of Dues Undermining ,UN Financial Stability Again. Fifth Committee Meeting Told, available at United Nations web site http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20001031.gaab3395.doc.html, accessed 25 March 2003, 1.

[42] The Campaign to End Genocide- An Initiative of the World Federalist Association, *The Failures of the Current Approach to Peace Operations*, June 2002., [journal on-line] available at http://www.endgenocide.org/ceg-rrf/problems.htm accessed 29 January 2003,3.

such forces in continual readiness pending their use.[43] Given the lack of will to fund the United

Nations normal peacekeeping operations, nations will be hard pressed to antae up even more

funds to support a United Nations Legion. Funding redirected to the United Nations from a

national military or defence budget toward a United Nations Legion may limit both the flexibility

and strength of sovereign nations' armed forces. As the strength of a nations' armed forces

dwindles, so too does its national power and the ability to employ soft power. This in itself may

be an unsolvable issue that would stop the United Nations Legion in its infancy, no matter how

good the idea.

Adding to the cost challenge is the fact that the independent standing force will need to

be deployed, sustained, administered and redeployed between and during each mission. This

would require a formidable reorganization of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and

infusion of additional personnel and funding just for administration alone. Tasks that are

currently performed by contributing nations would now have to be undertaken by the United

Nations. Therefore, adding up the cost of the peacekeepers, as well as the administrative tail, the

cost would be substantial and perhaps, from a members point of view, not economically viable.

It is interesting to note that the total cost of all United Nations programs and funds amounted to

about $4.6 billion per year in 1998, which equates to $0.88 per person on the planet while $778

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[43] Richard Gardner, *In Search of World Peace* (New York: Frederick A Praeger, 1964) Note 47 and 49.

billion was spent each year on arms, which was roughly $134 per person.[44] This begs the

question, is the international community concerned about international peace and stability or is it

only concerned as long as there is no additional cost involved?

Command and Control

Command and control is another issue that is cited as a problem with a United Nations

Legion structure. Current United Nations force commanders are in command of contingents, but

the contingents maintain their national character, customs and are subject at all times to the

discipline and regulations in force in their own national member forces.[45] The legion concept

would, however, appoint a commander, who like the other members of his force would be part of

the United Nations chain of command responsible to United Nations authorities, and not to his or

her country of origin.[46]

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[44] Press Release GA/AB/3252 29 October 1998, Total Annual Cost Of United Nations Programs About $4.6 Billion, While $778 Billion Spent Each Year On Arms, Fifth Committee Told, available from United Nations web site at http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1998/19981029.gaab3252.html, accessed 25 Mar 2003, 1.

[45] Report of the Military Staff Committee, ORSC, 2nd year 20 April 1947, Special Supplement No 1 (art 39), quoted in Walter J. Williams Jr, *Intergovernmental Military Forces…*, 578.

[46] The chosen United Nations commander would be selinJr,

The commander would be vested with administrative authority over the force, and such is responsible for the maintenance of discipline within the force.[47] This highlights the problem of establishing a base line with respect to military rules of conduct, as well as standards of punishment. Proponents of this system indicate that it would be extremely difficult to establish and enforce a United Nations code of service discipline since the legion soldiers would potentially come from 189 different countries, each with different laws, social norms, customs and religious beliefs. This is indeed a challenge, but proponents cite the fact that the unit would need to incorporate this into training and that each soldier that a country nominates to be part of the United Nations Legion should be a soldier that the country has placed in a position of trust, and is viewed as very capable. The issue is then not the education and training of the soldier, but what standard needs to be set, as standards of conduct and societal norms vary significantly from country to country. Although this is a difficult issue to deal with, soldiers would need to know the rules and regulations prior to volunteering for the legion, would need to be trained and educated during the initial training phase and the commander would need to establish a fair and equitable system of justice. Once the Legion members are trained with respect to the code of conduct, the unit inevitably functions as a team.[48] The stumbling block would be establishing an agreed upon system of justice and code of conduct that all nations are in agreement, that the

[47] Walter J. Williams Jr, *Intergovernmental Military Forces…,* 584.

[48] Four brave men who do not know each other will not dare to attack a lion. Four less brave men, but knowing each other well, sure of their reliability and consequence of their mutual aid, will attack resolutely" Colonel Charles Ardnant du Picq, 1880. United States Department of Defense Publication, *Joint Publication 3-60. Joint Doctrine for Targeting*, 17 January 2002, III-1.

United Nations believes is fair and that the commander can maintain and abide by. This will be

as much a challenge and perhaps as much a barrier to establishing a United Nations Legion as

financing of the force.

Recruitment and Training

In terms of recruiting, should the force be made up of national contingents, or individual

soldiers recruited around the world with or without quotas, or soldiers seconded to the United

Nations for a period of a few years?[49] The question that needs to be asked is 'who should

soldiers pledge allegiance to?'

Training standards currently differ, as well as technical capabilities and leadership and

soldier proficiency. A number of nations lack a professional modern equipment and trained

military.[50] A rapid deployed force that is willing to use force would need to utilize the current

technology during operations for situational awareness as well as intelligence gathering. Since

only the western nations have access to such technology this would put the burden on the leading

western nations for providing the technology, training the force and maintaining the operational

capability of the technology. This is a contentious issue since the public perception would be

that once again the western powers would have a dominating influence in the capabilities of such

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[49] William R Frye, *A United Nations Peace Force…,* 71.

[50] Paul F. Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 114-115.

a legion. It would be difficult for the less affluent African or central American countries to give

up their most technically proficient soldiers and officers to be lost to the United Nations Legion.

Additionally, there is concern that the new technology may some how migrate from the

high tech western nations to the technology hungry have not nations. For example, there is a

possibility that some of the United States surveillance and imagery technology could end up in

North Korea or Iran.

An equivalent amount of time and effort would need to be expended on establishing set

Rules of Engagement training, tactics and operational procedures. As well, the critical issue

would be the issue of trust. Would soldiers, who have little in common (culture, ideology,

religion and culture) accept serving the United Nations Legion and be willing to trust each other

in time of conflict?

The downsizing of national military forces and the growth in European regional

peacekeeping initiatives further depletes the pool of well-trained and well-equipped military

contingents from developed countries to serve in United Nations-led operations.[51] The growing

disparity between the developed countries and the developing countries is an additional

overriding factor for the inability of establishing a United Nations Legion.

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[51] A/55/305-S/2000/809 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations…,* 18.

Conclusion

Out of the ashes of the League of Nations, there emerged the United Nations, an

organization that since inception has grown in membership, influence and scope. It has tried to

keep pace with the changes in the international community and met many of the challenges along

the way. The United Nations has strived to maintain and enforce the principles that are outlined

in the Charter and efforts have been established to resolve international conflict. As the world

order shifts and changes, the United Nations has tried to adapt. In terms of peacekeeping, it has

transformed from establishing lightly armed forces between belligerent forces, into an

organization that has espoused to limit human suffering and use force for the betterment of the

international community. During the years, it has had failures as well as successes, and has

under gone substantial criticisms. It is, however, at cross roads in terms of where it should now

go. Since the end of the cold war, the world appears to be more unstable, and as a result, there is

a requirement for more peace enforcement missions than ever before. These peace enforcement

missions are now more dangerous, less predictable and require a more rapid reaction if lives are

to be saved and nation states are to survive. These changes have once again put the United

Nations method of organizing, deploying and establishing peace support operations in the critical

eye. The United Nations has recognized this, and has embarked on a program of revitalization

and reorganization with a look to improving their peace support 'modi-oprandi'. Out of the

quest for revitalization the concept of establishing a United Nations Legion has remerged. This

standing force under United Nations command capable of rapidly deploying to areas of the world

that cannot wait for the establishment of a United Nations force via the contribution system, would provide respite to some of the most pressing and politically sensitive missions. The legion concept in one form or another is as old as the United Nations itself, but so to are the problems associated with establishing this force. Of the many challenges faced with such a force the most notable are that of political will, financial feasibility, command and control and finally recruitment and training. Not withstanding the international communities' desire to support international peace and stability as outlined in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, there is still too little desire to establish a legion type force, and as a result the United Nations will not in the foreseeable future be capable of establishing this much required force.

The United Nations, however, is nothing more than a collective of 189 nation-states, and for any positive action to take place, the collective members of the United Nations must each support the drive forward. This support needs to come not just in words and political rhetoric during General Assembly meetings, but via concrete actions from member states. These actions need to take the form of providing direct funding for peace support operations, and setting the example by demonstrating real political actions, none of which currently exist today.

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