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EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZON

**UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS – A RECIPE FOR REFORM AND
SUCCESS**

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NEW HORIZONS

UNITED NATIONS (UN) PEACE OPERATIONS – A RECIPE FOR REFORM AND SUCCESS

The United Nations was founded at the end of a war during which genocide had been committed on a horrific scale. Its prime objective was to prevent such a conflict from ever happening again...¹

In December of 1999, Kofi Annan reflected on the inception of the UN after its failure in Rwanda and reminded the world of its *raison d'être*. What was the genesis of the UN and what role did it foresee for itself in the world?

After the First World War, the League of Nations was established with the aim of preventing another global conflict. But the League failed to realise this self-appointed goal. Unable to curb Japanese imperialist ambitions, the League disintegrated when it became apparent that it had been powerless to stop the world sliding towards the abyss of another major conflict.² However, towards the end of the Second World War, with vivid images of horror still fresh in the minds of the world's statesmen, there was renewed impetus to find a way of preventing military conflict. The increasing lethality of modern weapons and the possibility of a cataclysmic future war provided additional motivation to establish a supranational organisation that would achieve the elusive goal of international peace. The UN was thus created in late 1945

¹. United Nations, "The Secretary-General, Statement on Receiving the Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, 16 December 1999," <http://www.un.org/News/press/docs/1999/sgsm6619.html>; Internet; accessed 23 October 2004, 1.

². Jonathan Timms, "The Failure of the League of Nations," *Planet Papers*, <http://www.planetpapers.com/Assets/1667.php.htm>; Internet; accessed 13 October 2004, 1-2.

with this paramount objective in mind: to prevent the world from engaging in another war.

The UN's Charter was the foundation on which global peace would rest. The key principle of the Charter was that all member nations would seek to resolve their differences through the UN. Should this fail, member nations would act collectively to remove threats to peace and suppress acts of aggression.³ However, despite the high ideals behind the inception of the UN and the laudable aims of its Charter, the UN has not been able to adequately realise a peaceful world. Regrettably, the UN has frequently been ineffective in those conflicts where it has chosen to intervene. An examination of its track record is important to understand why it has failed and what steps can be taken to enhance its future effectiveness. It is also important to acknowledge the many successes the UN has had. Whilst reform of the UN is undoubtedly necessary, it will be vital to hold fast onto those aspects of the UN that have worked well. The key to reform of the UN will be to learn from previous mistakes whilst recognising and reinforcing those aspects of its work that are successful.

“Peace operations” is a broad term and will be used in this dissertation to cover the full spectrum of peace-related operations, from preventative diplomacy through to peacekeeping and peace enforcement. This paper will argue that significant reform within the UN is necessary to make it consistently effective in peace operations. Key recommendations will include the need for Charter reform and the requirement to develop an effective UN intelligence capability. Holistic mandates are also considered crucial for future success as is the vital importance of swiftly deploying a decisive force, sometimes preventatively, to resolve a dispute. The final

recommendation will be that moral courage, not political expediency, should have primacy in the selection criteria for future Secretarys-General.

This paper will start by very briefly discussing the major institutions within the UN that manage peace operations. This will be followed by a concise examination of the relationship between peace operations and the UN Charter. The UN's operations into Rwanda, East Timor and Mozambique will then be used as case studies. The UN's ill-fated operation into Rwanda will be examined, as an analysis of this campaign offers a rich vein of valuable lessons to be learned from an operation that went badly wrong. The UN operation into East Timor will be assessed as it gives an excellent insight into a moderately successful peace operation in a modern context. The notable UN success in Mozambique will be considered because it provides an invaluable contemporary example of a highly effective UN operation. The paper will then compare the lessons learned from both the successful and unsuccessful aspects of UN operations. Based on this comparison, recommendations for the reform of the UN will be made.

Whilst some would consider the General Assembly as the UN's main forum, in reality, it shares the same status as its other main internal bodies. The General Assembly is perhaps the most democratic body within the UN, as it is composed of all members, each with equal voting rights, and it affords an open forum in which to raise issues concerning peace operations. Additionally, unlike the Security Council, there is no right of veto and only a two-thirds majority is required to pass a resolution.⁴

³. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations* (New York: UN, 1945), 1.

⁴. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 2-3.

Maintaining international peace is the Security Council's principal role and this body is the final arbiter on the creation, mandating and termination of any peace operation. The Security Council is guided by the UN Charter to initially attempt a peaceful solution to a crisis, but economic sanctions and military force may be used as subsequent steps to persuade nations to comply with its resolutions. The Council has five permanent members (China, France, Russia, UK and US) and 10 non-permanent, with the five permanent members having right of veto on any Security Council resolution.⁵ This composition and voting structure can make it difficult to pass a resolution on a peace operation. As a result of the right of veto, any permanent member has the ability to block a proposed course of action by other Security Council members if they perceive a conflict with their national self-interest. Although the Secretary-General plays a central role at Security Council meetings, the office holds no real executive power and Secretaries-General must rely on their powers of persuasion and diplomacy to convince the Security Council to pursue a controversial course of action.⁶

Chapter VI of the Charter allows the Security Council to mandate *peacekeeping* operations and a force may only be deployed with the concurrence of all the parties in dispute. Under this Chapter, operations are normally limited to the monitoring of established peace agreements. Chapter VII of the Charter provides for *peace enforcement* operations in cases of international aggression or where an intra-state or failed state dispute threatens international peace and security. Peace enforcement operations mandated under this Chapter may use military

⁵. Ibid., 3-4.

force to coerce belligerent parties to comply with Security Council resolutions.⁷

Rwanda Case Study

The origins of this conflict can be traced to Rwanda's colonial past. In governing this nation, the Belgians heavily favoured the Tutsi ethnic minority over the Hutu majority. Only Tutsis were allowed to achieve higher levels of education and hold prominent positions in Rwandan society. In the late 1950s, simmering Hutu resentment over continued ethnic discrimination eventually boiled over and they murdered thousands of Tutsis and forced many more into neighbouring countries. The banished Tutsis established a rebel army called the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and, from 1990 onwards, conducted numerous raids into Rwanda.⁸

An initial report, commissioned by Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, indicated that two battalions would be required to implement the peace plan that had been brokered between the two sides in August 1993.⁹ The Security Council took months to deal with the issue, but eventually passed Resolution 872 in October 1993, which established UNAMIR (United Nations

⁶. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 10.

⁷. Trevor Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4-6; United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 4-6.

⁸. William Shawcross, *Deliver Us From Evil*, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2000), 125-126; United Nations, *The Blue Helmets – A Review of United Nations Peace-keeping, 3rd ed* (New York: UN, 1996), 341.

⁹. Shawcross, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 127.

Assistance Mission in Rwanda).¹⁰ This force was armed with a peacekeeping mandate under Chapter VI of the UN Charter¹¹ and comprised of just one battalion,¹² not the two battalions recommended in the initial report.

The force commander, Canadian Major-General Romeo Dallaire, was appalled by the Security Council's apparent lack of commitment, as he considered that the resources provided to UNAMIR were completely inadequate for the task at hand.¹³ The Security Council had recently received a number of reports indicating that future acts of genocide were a very real possibility. The Security Council was also made aware that the Hutu militia had carried out previous massacres and it was widely known that they were actively engaged in stockpiling and caching weapons – in direct violation of the peace accords. The government radio station was active in disseminating the most extreme messages with unmistakable genocidal undertones. Finally, and most importantly, Dallaire had received credible reports, from two different sources, that the Hutu-controlled government was planning massacres and genocide.¹⁴ When Dallaire cabled the UN seeking permission to act on this information, he was ordered not to do so, as it would clearly exceed the mandate given in Resolution 872.¹⁵

¹⁰. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets*..., 344.

¹¹. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets*..., 344.

¹². Shawcross, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 127.

¹³. *Ibid.*, 128-129.

¹⁴. Walter Dorn and Jonathan Matloff, "Preventing the Bloodbath: Could the UN have Predicted and Prevented the Rwandan Genocide?," *The Journal of Conflict Studies* (Spring 2000): 34.

The aircraft carrying the President of Rwanda was shot down on 6 April 1994. This event triggered widespread violence that quickly developed into the full-scale genocide that had been envisaged by Dallaire. On 17 April 2004, Dallaire reported what was happening and he pleaded with the UN to both reinforce his troop strength to five thousand men and issue a peace enforcement mandate that would allow him to re-establish peace and security. Incredibly, the Security Council rejected both of Dallaire's requests and UNAMIR's numbers were actually cut from 450 to 270 men.¹⁶ Whilst the UN and individual nations studiously avoided using the word "genocide"—which carries with it the obligation to act under international law—the killings went on. It is now estimated that there were between 500,000 and one million victims of the genocide.¹⁷

The UN was unsuccessful in this conflict. It failed to engage in any of the preventative measures that could have stopped many of the senseless killings. In essence, a substantially under-equipped military force was deployed with an inadequate mandate. This combination was accurately perceived by the main protagonists to lack either the capability or the will to deal with their evil intent. Whilst the UN was ultimately able to save an estimated 20,000 lives,¹⁸ UNAMIR was unable to stop the vast majority of killings. The UN also failed to recognise the full significance of the warnings Dallaire was providing about impending genocide. If the UN

¹⁵. Shawcross, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 130.

¹⁶. *Ibid.*, 136-138.

¹⁷. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets...*, 346.

¹⁸. Dorn and Matloff, "Preventing the Bloodbath...", 39.

had an intelligence capability to interpret these warnings, they may well have been given more credence and been heeded. Once the killings were underway, a swift reinforcement of combat forces—of the size suggested by Dallaire—probably would have forced the perpetrators to recalculate the political and military costs of continuing the killings.¹⁹ A combination of a lack of political will within the UN, and the Secretary-General’s inability to influence the Security Council, allowed a nightmarish descent into a savage and brutal confrontation that was certainly preventable.

In a post conflict analysis, Dallaire concluded that the Security Council had ‘...foundered in the face of mounting heaps of bodies growing daily...UNAMIR could do little to stop the killing.’²⁰ In December 1999, Kofi Annan recognised that UNAMIR was “...neither mandated nor equipped for the forceful action which would have been needed to prevent or halt the genocide.”²¹

East Timor Case Study

Holland and Portugal colonised the island of Timor in the seventeenth century and subsequently partitioned it between themselves in 1859. Indonesia took over the Dutch portion of the island in 1950 and militarily annexed the Portuguese segment (East Timor) in 1975. In an August 1999 UN-supervised referendum, the people of East Timor overwhelmingly chose to break away from Indonesian rule—which had been characterised by brutal military repression—

¹⁹. Shawcross, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 136-137.

²⁰. *Ibid.*, 140.

to seek independence. The pro-Indonesian militias within East Timor then embarked on a reign of terror where thousands of pro-independence supporters were killed and much of the nation's infrastructure was systematically destroyed. In September 1999, Indonesia bowed to immense international pressure and invited the United Nations to send a peacekeeping force to East Timor.²²

The UN initially deployed its mission in East Timor (UNAMET) in June 1999, with the purpose of overseeing the referendum on self-determination. This civilian contingent, of less than 1000 personnel, was unprepared and unable to deal with the violence that occurred after the vote. As was the case in Rwanda, the UN lacked an effective intelligence capability that could have interpreted the early warning signs²³ of post-referendum violence. However, the Security Council did react quickly once reports of "...widespread murder and massacre, along with rumours of genocide and ethnic cleansing..."²⁴ reached the international community. On 15 September 1999, the Security Council established the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET).²⁵ This force was armed with a robust mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter that authorised it to take "...all necessary measures..."²⁶ to achieve its mission of restoring peace

²¹. United Nations. "The Secretary-General, Statement...", 1.

²². Encyclopedia.com, "East Timor – History," http://www.encyclopedia.com/printable.asp?url=//ssi/section/EastTimor_History.html; Internet; accessed 24 January 2005, 1.

²³. Commodore Roger Girouard, Eliot Lowey and Major Thomas Rippon, "Leadership for a Sustainable Culture of Peace: The UN mission in East Timor," *Canadian Military Journal* Vol. 5, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 59.

²⁴. Ibid., 58.

²⁵. Ibid., 58.

²⁶. Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations*, 288.

and security. INTERFET was a potent force of 11,000 troops drawn from 22 nations²⁷ that swiftly brought the security situation under control. With the removal of the threat of insurgent action by pro-Indonesian forces, the Security Council established the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in October 1999. UNTAET was a groundbreaking decision by the Security Council, as it was the first time that the UN became fully responsible for the administration of an entire nation.²⁸ Sergio De Mello headed the UNTAET team charged with the responsibility of establishing the new nation to the point that it would become self-governing. UNTAET was so successful in its task that, within three years, a democratic government had been established and East Timor had become an independent, sovereign state.²⁹ The UN continued supporting East Timor after recognising its sovereignty by establishing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET). The mission of UNMISSET is to provide “...assistance to core administrative structures critical to the viability and political stability of East Timor...”³⁰ UNMISSET continues its work today, but is expected to conclude in May 2005.³¹

The UN's involvement in East Timor could be considered a qualified success. The UN

²⁷. Michael G. Smith, *Peacekeeping in East Timor – The Path to Independence*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 19.

²⁸. Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations*, 293.

²⁹. United Nations, “UNMISSET, United Nations Support in East Timor – Background,” <http://www.un.org.dept/dpko/missions/unmiset/background.html>; Internet; accessed 25 January 2005, 2.

³⁰. *Ibid.*, 2.

³¹. United Nations, “UN Security Council approves extension of UNMISSET for a final six months,” <http://www.unmiset.org>; Internet; accessed 25 January 2005, 1.

must shoulder some of the burden for the initial misjudgement of the local situation prior to the referendum. Although subtle, there were signs of a planned backlash, should the vote not have gone Indonesia's way.³² With accurate intelligence, the UN may well have been able to predict that extensive violence was being carefully orchestrated behind the scenes.

However, having initially underestimated the reaction to a pro-independence vote, the UN recovered well. Major-General Cosgrove, the Australian commander of INTERFET, credited success to a clear mandate that authorised an enforcement operation combined with "...a very powerful force that was able to meet and overwhelm the threat."³³ Kofi Annan also observed that the rapid deployment of INTERFET was crucial to containing the conflict.³⁴ The deputy force commander of UNTAET, Major General Mike Smith, identified that a feasible and achievable mandate was essential for establishing a secure environment and noted: "In East Timor, the establishment and maintenance of security was central to everything."³⁵ INTERFET's success was underpinned by a combination of factors: it was a credible military force, swiftly despatched and armed with appropriate rules of engagement.³⁶ An equally crucial facet of the UN's involvement in East Timor is its long-term commitment. This far-sighted approach by the UN is vital and has underwritten East Timor's future as a viable nation.

³². Girouard, Lowey and Rippon, "Leadership...", 59.

³³. Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations*, 291.

³⁴. Ibid., 292.

³⁵. Smith, *Peacekeeping in East Timor...*, 102, 105.

³⁶. Girouard, Lowey and Rippon, "Leadership...", 60.

Mozambique Case Study

In 1975, Mozambique gained its independence from Portugal and its inaugural government was formed from the successful Marxist-Leninist guerrilla movement FRELIMO (Frente para a Libertação de Moçambique) that had fought and wrested control from the Portuguese. In 1976, the Rhodesian and South African Governments, concerned at the emergence of a new ultra left-wing African government as a neighbour, backed the insurgency group RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) to carry out insurrection operations within Mozambique. The ensuing civil war and subsequent collapse of the FRELIMO government's command economy resulted in Mozambique becoming the poorest country in the world.³⁷ Out of a population of 17 million, nearly 5 million inhabitants had been severely affected by the fighting, with one and a half million fleeing to neighbouring countries.³⁸

To the credit of the leaders of FRELIMO and RENAMO, both parties had signed a General Peace Agreement (GPA) in October 1992. The GPA included provisions for a cease-fire, demobilisation of military forces and general elections. The signatories to the GPA then requested the UN assist with the implementation of this accord. The Security Council initially adopted a resolution that despatched 25 military observers, however, once in country, these observers became increasingly concerned at the frequent violations of the brokered cease-fire.³⁹

³⁷. Norrie Macqueen, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960*, (Malaysia: Pearson Education, 2002), 146-151, 153.

³⁸. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets...*, 321.

³⁹. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets...*, 322.

In response to a recommendation from the Secretary-General, the Security Council adopted Resolution 797 in December 1992 that established the peacekeeping force of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ).⁴⁰

ONUMOZ was deployed with a wide, overarching mandate that was designed to enable the deployed force to deal effectively with the situation. The Council identified that resolving the political, military, electoral and humanitarian issues would be crucial to establishing lasting peace.⁴¹ ONUMOZ consisted of over 6,500 military personnel and conducted its tasks in a carefully sequenced and co-ordinated way. For example, the military task of demobilising troops was completed before elections were held. Soldiers discharged in this phase were given: “A generous terminal payment along with food benefits and agricultural tools...”⁴² that enabled them to make a fresh start on the land. In this way, ONUMOZ was able to demobilise some 80,000 combatants and return them to civilian life.⁴³ On the humanitarian front, ONUMOZ was able to establish secure lines of communication throughout the country, which not only afforded the distribution of aid but also allowed displaced persons to return home. With the humanitarian and military situation largely under control, ONUMOZ was able to focus on the delicate task of keeping the political parties engaged in the process whilst concurrently organising forthcoming elections. At one critical juncture, the Secretary-General visited Mozambique and intervened personally when negotiations between the political parties stalled on the issue of the composition

⁴⁰. Ibid., 323.

⁴¹. Ibid., 323.

⁴². Macqueen, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960*, 160.

⁴³. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets...*, 337.

of the National Elections Commission. With considerable diplomatic deftness, his intercession broke the deadlock and paved the way for a successful election.⁴⁴

The UN achieved a notable success in Mozambique. ONUMOZ was fully able to realise its mandate, culminating in successful free and fair elections that returned the country to democratic rule.⁴⁵ Whilst it is certainly true that a key ingredient for the success was a deep-seated commitment by both of the political leaders to peace,⁴⁶ the UN also deserves substantial credit for its contribution. The mandate given to ONUMOZ identified all of the relevant issues and then set about addressing them in a synchronised way. This enabled ONUMOZ to lay a solid foundation and then build steadily towards lasting peace in Mozambique. An excellent indication of its success is that more than four million people (including one and a half million refugees in neighbouring countries) voluntarily returned to their place of origin as a direct result of the UN operation.⁴⁷ The UN was also able to apply lessons learned from previous peacekeeping missions to the Mozambique operation. Notably, ONUMOZ was of sufficient size to deal decisively with the military situation and this gave the UN an authoritative edge when dealing with the protagonists. The Secretary-General also rightly recognised the vital imperative of the military situation being brought under control before elections were held.⁴⁸ The Security Council

⁴⁴. Ibid., 324-328.

⁴⁵. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets...*, 334.

⁴⁶. Macqueen, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960*, 165.

⁴⁷. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets...*, 337.

⁴⁸. Macqueen, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960*, 159.

also displayed commendable timeliness in dealing with issues that could have quickly de-railed the whole process. For instance, when the President of RENAMO threatened to withdraw from the elections the day before they were due to start, the Security Council was able to immediately persuade both Nelson Mandela and Robert Mugabe to apply sufficient direct diplomatic pressure to reverse his decision within a day.⁴⁹ Perhaps the greatest contribution was the impressive way that both the Security Council and the Secretary-General worked together. The Security Council routinely heeded the advice of the Secretary-General on key issues and approved resolutions accordingly. Likewise, the Secretary-General was quick to respond to a Security Council request to intervene personally and Boutros-Ghali quickly brought to bear the diplomatic resources needed to break a deadlock.

Recommendations for Reforms

In early 2000, the UN recognised that a comprehensive review of its peace activities was necessary to ensure that previous mistakes were not repeated. The Brahimi Report was the outcome of this review and the UN, to its considerable credit, has undertaken substantial reform over the last decade to redress previous shortcomings. However, much critical reform and restructuring remains to be done and there is still significant room for improvement.

Recommendations will cover the requirement for Charter reform and the need for an effective UN intelligence capability. Comprehensive mandates are considered crucial, as is the vital importance of swiftly deploying a credible force to resolve a dispute. Security Council reform is essential to simplify its decision making process and allow it to act more decisively in a conflict. The final recommendation will be that moral courage should be the prime determinant when

selecting future Secretarys-General.

The UN Charter needs to be reformed. Chapter VI of the Charter prevents the Security Council from mandating an enforcement operation in a state's internal conflict. Chapter VII only provides for action in cases where a dispute threatens international peace and security. But conflicts, such as Rwanda, fall into neither of these categories and the Security Council is left struggling with the issue of mandating an operation that falls outside the Charter. The inherent dangers are that either the mandate falls well short of what is required to comply with Chapter VI, as seen in Rwanda, or may alternately sanction excessive force to meet the terms of Chapter VII. The UN Charter needs to reflect the reality that contemporary conflicts are frequently of an intra-state or failed state nature and there is often no consent amongst the belligerents as to how to resolve the dispute. Overcoming the sensitivities surrounding a nation's sovereignty in these issues would require very tight controls as to when force may be sanctioned, but the overriding imperative of protecting innocent people from the ravages of war would be worth it.

Accurate intelligence is vital for the accomplishment of any UN peace operation. A lack of effective intelligence directly contributed to the failure in Rwanda and also left the UN unprepared to deal with post vote violence in East Timor. Had the Security Council been forewarned with credible and reliable intelligence of plots of violence, UNAMIR and UNAMET may well have been in a position to force the conspirators to abandon, or at least, frustrate their malevolent intentions. The Brahimi Report acknowledges that this should be a future capability⁵⁰

⁴⁹. Macqueen, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960*, 164.

but this recommendation has yet to be realised. The UN needs to develop two distinct capabilities. The first is to gather information, both from open sources, and at the tactical level in theatre. The second is the ability to process this information into useable intelligence within the UN.⁵¹ The Security Council's future ability to issue appropriate mandates will be predicated on a reformed Charter combined with effective intelligence.

An appropriate mandate is a crucial prerequisite for the success of any peace operation. A combination of a comprehensive mandate, and operations that were methodically synchronised and phased, were fundamental to the success of the operation in Mozambique. The Brahimi Report recognised that future mandates needed to follow this model whilst clearly defining sufficiently robust rules of engagement to allow UN military units to defend both themselves and their mission objectives.⁵² In East Timor, the deputy military commander of UNTAET clearly identified that: "Mandates based on realistic worst-case planning are more likely to save lives and achieve a secure environment for all..."⁵³ The Security Council got it exactly right with the mandates for Mozambique and East Timor. Future UN mandates will need to identify and tackle each of the relevant issues and then determine which elements of an operation need to be

⁵⁰. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (New York: UN, 2000), x.

⁵¹. Major General Patrick Cammaert, "Conceptual, Organizational and Operational Issues Facing the United Nations in Providing Strategic Information and Peacekeeping Intelligence for its Peace Support Operations," <http://www.careleton.ca/csds/pki/doc/Cammaert.pdf>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005, 2-4. Major General Cammaert expands on this concept in his paper and suggests, perhaps somewhat idealistically, that mandates should be based on intelligence assessment alone and not political considerations.

⁵². United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Panel...*, ix-x.

⁵³. Smith, *Peacekeeping in East Timor...*, 103.

concluded before the next phase starts. A sound mandate with appropriate rules of engagement, promptly executed by a substantial and committed force, is the key to successful peace operations.

It is essential that the UN has the capability to swiftly deploy a credible force. This observation is reinforced by the immediate and positive effect the deployment of INTERFET had on the security situation in East Timor. The Brahimi Report addressed this issue⁵⁴ and the establishment of the Multinational Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) is the force created for this purpose. SHIRBRIG gives the UN the capability to rapidly deploy up to a brigade-sized force to meet any contingency.⁵⁵ Elements of SHIRBRIG were successfully deployed with United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.⁵⁶ Occasionally, the UN will also need to deploy a force in a preventative role. A key lesson from Rwanda was that the anticipatory deployment of troops would probably have prevented widespread genocide. Whilst this is a slightly contentious issue, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia⁵⁷ has set a welcome and successful precedent which could be effectively employed in many disputes that have the potential to escalate into conflict.

⁵⁴. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Panel...* , 55.

⁵⁵. Department of National Defence, “Backgrounder, The Origins and Status of SHIRBRIG, December 16 2002,” http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=500.htm; Internet; accessed 1 December 2004, 1.

⁵⁶. United Nations, “High Readiness Brigade for United Nations - SHIRBRIG,” <http://www.odin.dep.no.archieve/fdvedlegg/01/01/Shirb044.pdf.htm>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005, 7.

However, military force needs to be backed by political will for it to be effective. For example, in July 2004, the head of the British armed forces ruffled UN feathers when he suggested that the deployment of 5,000 troops⁵⁸ could potentially resolve the situation in Sudan. Despite such prompting, the Security Council has steadfastly refused to engage on this issue. The UN has demonstrated, albeit inconsistently, the political will to be both decisive and proactive. Security Council reform is now undoubtedly necessary to allow it to draw on the political strengths of new member nations and introduce a more equitable, streamlined decision making process.

However, what lies at the very heart of future UN success, is the need for the Secretary-General to display greater moral leadership. One of the UN's greatest failings in previous conflicts was the "... reluctance to distinguish victim from aggressor."⁵⁹ In the case of Rwanda, member nations and the UN deliberately avoided telling the truth because of the obligations concomitant upon uttering the word "genocide". The UN could provide moral leadership by taking the initiative and calling genocide what it is. For example, the current situation in the Sudan has uncomfortable parallels with Rwanda. The US Congress voted 422 votes to nil to describe what was happening in Darfur as "genocide"⁶⁰ but other individual member nations and the UN⁶¹ are all carefully avoiding the word. Amongst such collective hand wringing, an estimated 1,000

⁵⁷. United Nations, "United Nations Preventive Deployment Force," <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/comission/unpredb.htm>; Internet; accessed 1 December 2004, 2.

⁵⁸. "Sudan – The world notices Darfur," *The Economist*, July 31st, 2004, 37.

⁵⁹. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Panel...*, ix.

⁶⁰. "Sudan – The world notices Darfur,"..., 11.

people are dying each day in the Sudan.⁶² The Secretary-General needs to possess the courage and moral leadership to publicly take the lead on such issues. Historically, the Security Council nomination of a Secretary-General candidate (prior to a confirming vote by the General Assembly) has been based on the political backing of the five permanent members of the Council.⁶³ This has usually resulted in the selection of someone who has been "...more secretary than a general...".⁶⁴ Individual member nations and the Security Council collectively need to rethink this approach. The nomination and selection of a forthright Secretary-General with the moral willpower to confront threats to peace should be the prime determinant when selecting a candidate for this post.

The UN has set itself the task of maintaining international peace and security but not all of its peace operations in pursuit of this goal have been successful. Many lessons need to be learned from both its successes and failures if it is to become a consistently effective force in peace operations. This paper has identified several areas of reform that will need to be undertaken.

The UN Charter is in urgent need of reform to meet the needs of the contemporary world. Present disputes are frequently of either an intra-state or failed state nature. The Charter needs to

⁶¹. Ewen MacAskill, "Darfur crimes fall short of genocide, says UN," *Guardian Weekly*, February 4, 2005, 5.

⁶². "Sudan – The world notices Darfur," ..., 11.

⁶³. Public Broadcasting Service, "Kofi Annan – Centre of the Storm – What Qualifications and Skills should a Secretary-General have?," <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/un/life.html>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005, 2.

⁶⁴. As quoted in: Public Broadcasting Service, "Kofi Annan...", 2.

reflect this fact and provide a solid foundation on which the Security Council can intervene. An amended Charter would greatly assist the Security Council in determining appropriate mandates for peace operations. The UN must develop an effective intelligence capability. Not only will this provide invaluable information to UN military forces in the field; it will give the Security Council accurate and reliable information upon which to base resolutions. The Security Council will need to ensure that future mandates identify all the relevant concerns and issue robust rules of engagement that allow a UN force to pursue mission objectives whilst defending itself. The establishment of SHIRBRIG has given the UN an invaluable tool in the realm of peace operations and this concept has already proved its worth in the field. The deployment of UNPREDEP marked a paradigm shift whereby the UN showed a willingness to be a proactive organisation and prevent disputes from turning into conflicts. Reform of the Security Council is also required to introduce a more equitable, streamlined decision making process. Lastly, and most importantly, the Security Council needs to reconsider its priorities when nominating a Secretary-General. A courageous and principled Secretary-General could, through personal example, persuade nations to set aside their narrow self-interest for the greater good of the international community.

The UN is an indispensable organisation in the global community. Its self-prescribed goal of attaining international peace is perhaps the most admirable ambition that humankind can embrace. It is precisely because attaining this prize promises such rich rewards, that this paper has been critical of previous UN performances and has been so direct in making suggestions for possible reform. The UN has demonstrated that it can be a powerful and effective force in

bringing about peace. The ability to consistently achieve this ambition on a global scale lies within the UN's grasp if it has the courage to enact the necessary reforms. Perhaps then, we will finally witness the saving of mankind from "... the scourge of war."⁶⁵

⁶⁵. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1.

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