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The Theoretical and Practical Feasibility of a United Nations Force¹

Introduction

The recent expansion of United Nations peacekeeping operations throughout the world has rekindled debate on whether, and to what degree, standby agreements can improve the international community's ability to manage conflict. Critics of existing ad hoc approaches to mustering forces have proposed various alternative models of arranged force packages and deployment/sustainment arrangements. Two such models are standing forces and standby forces. Standing forces are trained, paid, and commanded by the United Nations, while standby forces consist of donated material and volunteer troops earmarked for U.N. duty, but are supported, trained, and commanded by their respective national authorities. A related issue is the desirability of establishing a force headquarters, rather than a force per se, to manage pre-deployment planning and to handle the command and control aspects of a mission.

The notion of a global army is nothing new. Indeed, in recent times, interest in creating a standing intervention force has surfaced time and again. Praised by some and pilloried by others, a permanent U.N. army represents perhaps the pinnacle of international cooperation. After examining the roots of this concept, this Article traces the evolution of various force models. This Article also examines the post-1991 period where the hitherto discredited standing force model has seen something of a renaissance, despite formidable and enduring obstacles to its implementation, and discusses a recent Canadian initiative to improve U.N. rapid reaction capability.

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1. An earlier version of this paper ("Efforts to Establish UN Stand-by Arrangements: An Historical Account and Appraisal") was delivered in February 1995 to the first meeting of the Canadian Initiative to Improve the Rapid Reaction Capability of the United Nations. See Alex Morrison, *The Fiction of a UN Standing Army*, THE FLETCHER F. OF WORLD AFF., Winter/Spring 1994, at 83.

I. From War to Peace

An atmosphere of anticipation and optimism characterized the international political context of the mid-1940s. On the threshold of victory in Europe, the Great Powers, led by the United States, collectively tallied the costs of global conflict and resolved to ensure that such conflagrations would never occur again. Recalling the failure of the League of Nations to check German expansion between the World Wars and the hopelessly ill-conceived Kellogg-Briand Pact which sought to outlaw war entirely, the Great Powers laid the groundwork for new institutional guarantees (or at least safeguards) against inter-State aggression at the Dumbarton Oaks "conversations" in the summer of 1944.

A year earlier, American Secretary of State Cordell Hull had devised the moral framework from which these guarantees would be derived. He suggested that the most politically and militarily powerful members of the international community should refrain from going to war, lest a third and perhaps final world-wide conflict erupt. In addition, he proposed that the Great Powers cooperate with each other and with the wider global community to maintain the hard-won peace. To ensure the effectiveness of joint actions to suppress threats to peace and security, Hull encouraged States to maintain armed forces of adequate size and configuration.²

Although lesser powers were excluded from Dumbarton Oaks and the discussions were a deliberate move by the Great Powers to establish a collective hegemony over the entire globe, there existed, initially, the key to the success of the proposals put forth at Dumbarton Oaks: political will. A commitment by the most powerful to construct mechanisms to ensure the peace and security of all, requiring the participation of all, is a recurring theme in the effort to establish standing and standby forces.

In the months before the U.N. Charter was signed in May of 1945, Canada and France voiced conflicting views regarding the theoretical international army, though there was as yet no consideration of a standing army with fully-integrated national contingents. Canadian concerns centered on command and control. Specifically, Canada resisted the idea that the Security Council could order Canadian troops to any crisis area at any time by fiat. This concern led to the inclusion of Article 44 in the U.N. Charter.

Canada was not resisting the establishment of standby force arrangements per se, although its reaction highlighted a point of contention—the question of national versus international control of what were hitherto considered national resources.³

2. BENJAMIN B. FERENCZ, *ENFORCING INTERNATIONAL LAW—A WAY TO WORLD PEACE* 425 (1983) (citations omitted).

3. One of the reasons for the ultimate refusal of the United States to join the League of Nations was U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's outright rejection of international control over U.S. forces. The issue of command and control has resurfaced recently with the Italians in Somalia, and repeatedly with the Americans everywhere the United Nations is involved. Of course, one of the myths of U.N. peacekeeping is that

The French, however, maintained that the Security Council should have a standing force available for immediate mobilization and deployment in order to carry out its mandate effectively. Despite these differences of opinion, there were no calls for a wholesale re-evaluation of the Dumbarton proposals when the delegates convened in San Francisco. The U.S.S.R. in particular was opposed to any significant change to the Dumbarton proposals. Generally, the signing of the U.N. Charter reflected an overall consensus on the necessity of creating some sort of international force.

Dumbarton Oaks clearly illustrates that the United Nations was founded to prevent a Third World War, by use of force if necessary. But it was equally clear that the preferred solution would be a political one.

II. Operationalizing the Concept: Clarity of Purpose, Ambiguity of Execution

In recognition of the fact that a great deal of coordination would be necessary to carry out military operations using contingents supplied by various nations, Chapter VII of the Charter provided for a Military Staff Committee (MSC). Composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5), the MSC was tasked to advise and assist the Security Council in planning operations and deploying the armed forces under the P-5's control.

These forces were to act as a formidable deterrent to would-be aggressors. Unlike the League of Nations, whose impotence was symbolized by the absence of military instruments, the integrated international force would boast two million ground troops (half provided by the P-5), thousands of combat aircraft, and hundreds of warships.⁴ A proposal to place atomic weapons at the Council's disposal was considered and rejected in light of the intent of the founders of the United Nations—to deter aggression through an awe-inspiring display of conventional military power.

Indications of which model would form the conceptual basis of the U.N. force surfaced in October of 1944. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt suggested that prior approval by Congress was not required before American military power could be made available to the Security Council. While this arrangement raised constitutional questions (which remain unresolved to this day), it seemed to resolve other questions—at least initially. By declaring that the Security Council must have the ability to act immediately if the peace was threatened, President Roosevelt seemed to indicate a clear preference for the standby approach. There was, however, no mention of anyone but the Americans training and equipping U.S. soldiers, and although the immediate reaction concept

forces are at all times commanded by the United Nations. In fact, they are only so commanded when permitted by national authorities.

4. *Big Five Would Provide Half of Police Total Favored by U.S.*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 24, 1946, at 1.

suggested a standing force, there was no indication that American forces would be permanently placed under international control. In any case, U.S. Congressional opposition (another recurring theme in the history of U.N. military operations) soon killed the idea.⁵ By opting out of standing force arrangements, the most powerful nation on earth had, perhaps unwittingly, set an example for the rest of the international community. While the goal of mustering an international force was still very much alive, America's eschewing of the standing force option did not bode well for that option's future.

A further setback for efforts to create a military force along the lines of one of the two models was that the entire concept was inadequately defined. While some believed that the still-theoretical force would be a standing one—stationed in one place and under the command of a single international authority—others believed that nations would maintain contingents earmarked for deployment but would otherwise retain national command and control. Most media accounts of the debate assumed the latter.

Further hindering these efforts was the U.N. Charter itself. Article 43 seemed to impose compulsory military service on Member States, but Article 44 made contributions to a collective effort to restore international peace and security *subject to prior consultation*. With no obligation of Member States to serve as an international posse, the likelihood of hammering out an arrangement for standing forces was dealt a significant blow. While there was, and still is, hope for formal, binding arrangements, there remain overwhelming indications that resources will not match rhetoric. Indeed, this is the experience of U.N. Secretariat members as they attempt to convince Member States to sign agreements which could lead to automatic assignment of forces.

III. Into the Cold War

Even before the East-West ideological conflict took firm shape, consensus among the P-5 began to unravel. In 1947, the MSC released a report entitled *General Principles Governing the Organization of the Armed Forces Made Available to the Security Council by Member Nations of the United Nations*.⁶ The document designated national contributions for U.N. duty: numbers, equipment, location, and level of readiness, as well as the procedures for integrating national forces into a large multinational force. In all, the report recommended forty-one articles, of which only twenty-five were supported by the P-5.

Soon after, cooperation became a rarity in the Security Council. To the dismay of the West, the Soviet Union consolidated its hold on Eastern

5. ARTHUR H. VANDENBERG, JR., *THE PRIVATE PAPERS OF SENATOR VANDENBERG* 112 (1952).

6. *General Principles Governing the Organization of the Armed Forces Made Available to the Security Council by Member Nations of the United Nations, Report of the Military Staff Committee*, U.N. SCOR, 2d Sess., Spec. Supp. 1, at 1, U.N. Doc. S/336 (1947).

Europe. In Asia, the victory of the Chinese communists in 1949 convinced the United States that a monolithic communist threat committed to the political destabilization of its neighbours was at hand. Agreement on any initiative foundered on the rocks of Security Council vetoes. The sole exception—U.N. action against North Korea in 1950—was made possible only because the Soviets boycotted Security Council proceedings to protest America's refusal to recognize Communist China. In any event, the multinational response to aggression on the Korean peninsula saw the United States acting as an "agent" of the United Nations. The Security Council and the General Assembly were barely involved in the organization and direction of the "police action." Orders received by the theater commander, U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, originated in Washington, not New York. Clearly, impromptu arrangements composed of "coalitions of the willing" were gaining the upper hand over standing force agreements.

However, the desirability of more formal arrangements—be they standing or standby—never completely vanished. In 1952, Secretary-General Trygve Lie proposed a "volunteer reserve" composed of national contingents. Despite these efforts, it was not until after the Suez Crisis in 1956 that the standing force model received serious attention. Recalling the frantic way in which the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I) was cobbled together and sent to the Sinai (in fact, the initial units of this first "peacekeeping" force arrived in-theatre within 72 hours), officials began to talk more openly about a standing military force. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Firoz Khan Noon first broached the subject in November 1956 by suggesting that the structure and resources which composed UNEF I be retained following the end of its mandate. This force would be the nucleus of a permanent army, staffed, equipped, and trained by the United Nations. He envisioned deployment of this U.N. army to a series of strategic areas around the world—a euphemism for potential flash-points.

An interesting development occurred following the publication in *Foreign Affairs* of an article by Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, in April 1957, five months after he was presented with the Nobel Peace Prize for initiating peacekeeping during the Suez Crisis.⁷ In an attempt to reduce the complex issue to simple terms the media took Pearson's suggestion of approaching peacekeeping in a more organized fashion to mean that a permanent force was the preferred option. In truth, Pearson advocated a less ambitious path, where national governments would signal their willingness to contribute contingents for peacekeeping missions. Pearson did not mention extending the duration of those commitments beyond the length of the mission's mandate, and he did not call for mustering forces necessary to fight a war.

The only permanent aspect of this otherwise standby force proposal was the appointment of a permanent military adviser to the Secretary-General who, along with a small number of staff officers, would carry out the

7. Lester B. Pearson, *Force for UN*, 35 FOREIGN AFF. 395 (1957).

day-to-day tasks associated with control of U.N. military activities such as cease-fire monitoring and border patrols. Indeed, Pearson's vision of this U.N. "machinery" was a cross between the standing and standby models, since he suggested the non-permanent members of the Security Council voluntarily contribute troops.

Novel as the idea was, the creation of a standing force was an unlikely prospect in the political context of the Cold War. With mutual suspicions and tensions running high, there was little hope that the United Nations and its organs—chief among them the MSC—would evolve into something greater than the sum of their parts. The old game of power politics and the primacy of national interest (reminiscent of America's inter-war desire to remain isolated from international affairs) resulted in a decisive lack of collective political will. In this climate, calls for either a standing or a binding standby force arrangement seemed hopelessly utopian. Still, the sheer emotional appeal of the idea—an effective, responsive "fire brigade" responsible to the entire international community—led some to keep the dream alive and to suggest ways to effect it. While the political obstacles were formidable (to say nothing of the military and financial ones), the notion that a permanent force was a cure for all the world's ills was not frozen by the Cold War.

IV. After the Gulf War: Optimism and Realism

Resurgent interest in a standing force model is largely attributable to the success of the United Nations during the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990-91. While some criticized the United Nations because of alleged co-opting by the United States, the fact that the basis for international action (in the form of economic sanctions and subsequent military action against Iraq) lay in Security Council resolutions rather than unilateral action breathed new life into Article 43 discussions. In 1991, eager to sustain momentum and to restore control of U.N.-sanctioned operations to an international authority, former U.N. Undersecretary-General in Charge of Peacekeeping, Sir Brian Urquhart, recommended clarification of the Article 43 clause dealing with the provision of forces for U.N. duty to determine the feasibility of expanding the "permanent machinery" to include a standing force.⁸ One possible reason why this was not considered feasible is the enduring inability or unwillingness of the principal state actors to subordinate their national interests and resources to supranational bodies. Indeed, the speed with which the most powerful members of the coalition acted following the outbreak of the Gulf Crisis is attributable to the fact that key national interests were at stake. Ownership of and access to petroleum resources, plus the political-military balance of power in the region, compelled the United States, Britain, France, Canada, and others to muster their diplomatic and military resources. There was no indication that

8. Brian Urquhart, *For a UN Volunteer Military Force*, N.Y. REV. OF BOOKS, June 10, 1993, at 3.

such a level of commitment was sustainable or repeatable if the nature and location of the crisis were different.

Nonetheless, since 1991, a number of interested parties have submitted a barrage of proposals to explore various force models. One U.S. university study recommended a three-tier model based on a reserve force of 500,000 personnel. This proposed force was to be composed of units under national command, a smaller, rapid-reaction force under U.N. command, and a standing peacekeeping force with centrally based and trained units.⁹

In a separate but related development, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) offered troops and infrastructure for peacekeeping duties in the former Yugoslavia. When these offers were accepted, the headquarters of NATO's Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) was dispatched to the Balkans. The genesis of this standby arrangement is in the Rome Declaration of December 1991, where the sixteen-member alliance decided to re-configure its force structure in response to the anticipated challenges of the post-Cold War era. The new three-tier structure comprises a ten-division (approximately 250,000 personnel) Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), backed by more numerous Main Defence Forces, and by Augmentation Forces which are kept at lower levels of readiness. Under normal circumstances, the sixteen-member North Atlantic Council makes decisions regarding the employment of NATO forces. However, since the United Nations is the *de facto* lead agency in the Balkans, deployment of the ARRC, with its powerful air and land forces and logistics capability, would likely require prior approval of the Security Council.

The most significant development in recent years was the first-ever meeting of the U.N. Security Council's heads of State on January 31, 1992. At this meeting, States submitted proposals concerning both force models. The French supported a force composed of volunteer contingents by committing 1,000 troops to U.N. peacekeeping. They were not, however, the first to take such action, as Canada and many other committed peacekeepers have for some time kept military units earmarked for U.N. duty. Still, the proposal was somewhat mistakenly treated as a new initiative and was accorded great—and undeserved—media attention (contrary to some media interpretations, there was no indication that this contingent would be permanently placed under U.N. control). What received markedly less publicity was that the French offer also required the MSC to operate as envisaged in the Charter—an unlikely prospect, to say the least. In any event, the French proposal offered significantly less than what Canada and others had done for decades: maintaining a U.N. standby battalion and skilled individuals ready for deployment at short notice.

At the January 1992 meeting, the heads of State also asked Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to investigate and report on the possibility

9. Alan K. Hendrickson, *Defining a New World Order* 42-46 (1991) (unpublished manuscript, on file with author); EDWARD J. DENNEHY ET AL., *A BLUE HELMET COMBAT FORCE* 13-15 (1993).

of making the Security Council more responsive to peace and security threats. His report, released six months later under the title *An Agenda for Peace*, drew upon Article 43 of the U.N. Charter to support the possibility of establishing units for peace enforcement.¹⁰ The report considered the provision of forces for a standing army, financial and logistical support, and other issues critical to successful peacekeeping. The U.N. Committee of 34 (Peacekeeping Operations) made additional calls for formal arrangements in its 1994 report.¹¹

In February of 1993, in a major shift of U.S. foreign policy, President Clinton unveiled Presidential Draft Directive 13 (PDD-13), which would have established a new set of criteria for American participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations. Some of these criteria were: a clear and present danger to international security, a demonstrable threat to U.S. interests, and sufficient domestic support for the operation. Some analysts maintained that these criteria could not be easily satisfied, thereby lessening the chance of necessary American involvement in certain crises. A significant aspect of PDD-13 was that placing U.S. military units under foreign command was permissible if the unit was no larger than a battalion and the possibility of combat was negligible. However, PDD-13 did not mention standby availability of any U.S. forces. Indeed, the directive permitted U.S. troops to question the orders of their non-American superiors on the grounds of military competence. This was hardly a vote of confidence in the United Nations.

In any event, PDD-13 was never signed, ostensibly because "apart from a tiny intellectual/practitioner community there was no constituency for peacekeeping in the United States."¹² PDD-13 was superseded in 1994 by Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25) which placed even more conditions on American participation in peacekeeping operations. Most notable among these conditions were: that the U.N. mandate be extremely clear, that the disputants agree in advance to a cessation of hostilities, and that the duration of the mission is known in advance. Regrettably, it is doubtful whether these criteria can be met either in whole or in part. The loss to the international community, which is still struggling to address the types of conflict the United States has pledged to avoid, has yet to be measured. However, there is still room for the United States to play a pivotal role in peace and security operations, even if not on the front lines. By lending its vast logistical and strategic transport resources to the United Nations, the United States can overcome some of the troubles which have plagued past and present multinational operations—namely timely force deployment and sustainment. It is unclear whether the new Republican-

10. BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI, *AN AGENDA FOR PEACE: PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY, PEACEMAKING, AND PEACEKEEPING* (1992).

11. *Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peace-Keeping Operations in All Their Aspects*, U.N. Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, 49th Sess., U.N. Doc. A/49/136 (1994).

12. Christopher Brady & Sam Daws, *UN Operations: The Political-Military Interface*, INT'L PEACEKEEPING, Spring 1994, at 58, 63-64.

controlled Congress will follow through on its position that the United States should not be a major player in peacekeeping.¹³

V. Enduring Issues and Challenges

At present, there is little chance that the P-5 will move any closer to the conclusion of any formal arrangements for a standing force. Rather, for political and operational reasons, U.N. operations will for the foreseeable future be characterized by their ad hoc nature. In the first place, the reluctance to relinquish control of one's human and material resources, acquired and maintained at enormous expense, is understandable where freedom of action is considered key to the realization of foreign policy goals. If a crisis affects the core interests of a given state whose forces are not under national command, but does not, in the opinion of the United Nations, present a threat to international peace and security, the state in question may find itself powerless to respond. Suggestions that the United States, either unilaterally or with its closest allies, could have ejected Iraqi forces from Kuwait without the consent of the United Nations is a case in point.¹⁴ The matter is further highlighted by the (overly) stringent conditions for American involvement in peacekeeping operations. Recent declarations by senior members of the Republican Party that U.S. troops will neither take part in initiatives which are tangential to American interests, nor serve under foreign command, suggest that any formal arrangement is without U.S. support. In that case, efforts to establish standing or standby force arrangements are bound to fail.

Another dimension of political will involves faith (or lack thereof) in the ability of international organizations to devise and implement effective mandates. If the mission objectives and rules of engagement are unclear (as was the case in Somalia, where there was disagreement over whether the warring factions could or should be disarmed), or if disputants are permitted to defy the terms of the mandate (as is the case in the former Yugoslavia where Bosnian Muslim and Serb armies were permitted to attack and launch attacks from U.N.-designated "safe havens"), conflict management will surely fail. In such cases, the result is a mandate which is no longer enforceable and an organization which is neither credible in the eyes of the combatants, nor worthy of support in the eyes of its members. Moreover, the intractability of a conflict acts as a strong disincentive to multinational intervention, thereby undermining one of the principal justifications for maintaining standing or standby forces.

13. Already, many Republicans have advocated the reduction of non-defense expenditures—such as peacekeeping—in order to fund higher-priority programs. See Philip Finnegan, *Republicans Eye Conversion, Peacekeeping Cuts*, DEF. NEWS, Nov. 14, 1994, at 1, 18.

14. Brady & Daws, *supra* note 12, at 64. According to the authors, experience in Korea and Kuwait has persuaded high-ranking U.S. officials that a separation of policy-making (U.N. responsibility) and implementation (U.S. responsibility) is efficient, and that standby arrangements are unnecessary.

The desirability of a standing U.N. force has its roots in the belief that such a force is more professional, responsive, efficient, and financially supportable than those available under current arrangements.¹⁵ This argument is plausible because training will be standardized, emphasizing U.N. methods of operation (likely including a mix of diplomatic, policing, and traditional military skills), and the force will have the means to project and sustain military power over long distances and for long periods of time.

A reduction in reaction time is achievable if troops are organized into well-trained units stationed at bases around the globe with the requisite air and sea transport capabilities. But responsiveness is not dependent on organization and material resources if the deployment is delayed by political wrangling over the substance of a mandate. Indeed, international criticism levelled at the relief mission to Rwanda did not focus on any lack of air transport capability, but rather at the reluctance of the international community to employ it in a timely fashion.

Efficiency in the planning and preparation stage may heighten the chances of mission success, particularly if the size of the planning staff is enlarged to facilitate coordination between the relevant departments and organs of the United Nations, as well as between the force commander and U.N. headquarters. A permanent, twenty-four-hour staff in New York City may have deflected criticism by senior members of the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) that their concerns regarding the progress of the mission went unheard after-hours and on weekends. On the other hand, it is not clear whether efficiency has suffered decisively under the current ad hoc system. A U.N. military headquarters, located outside of New York City, with responsibility for the planning and conduct of initial peacekeeping operations, seems necessary.

The notion that a standing peacekeeping force would be financially more stable than a standby force assumes that a secure source of funding would be available throughout the duration of a mission. Since money, in the standing force model, is collected in advance and held in a "peacekeeping fund," refusals to support a mission do not irrevocably terminate it. However, the adequacy of such arrangements is questionable if the level of peacekeeping activity rises sharply and missions are lengthy. In the 1990s, an unforeseen increase in the number and scope of U.N. missions led financially-strapped governments to avoid open-ended commitments and to withdraw political and financial support for missions that, in their estimation, were not proceeding well. Some good examples are the departure of Canadians from Cyprus after almost three decades and the withdrawal of the Italian contingent from the Somalia operation following a disagreement with the force commander. In any event, the fact that the sizeable debt accumulated over decades of peacekeeping has not demonstrably crippled U.N. operations suggests that the reputed financial advantages of the standing force model are illusory.

15. For an in-depth analysis of these "advantages," see PAUL F. DIEHL, *INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING* (1993).

States with common interests may share a clarity of purpose which will help forge a consensus, thereby overcoming doubts surrounding the comparative advantages offered by permanent arrangements over impromptu ones. Operationally, planning and execution may go considerably smoother, and command and control may be more solid, if the partners have previously taken part in joint command and field exercises. Indeed, if efforts to fine-tune (and not replace) the ad hoc approach to fit different mission contexts are made, there would be even less requirement for alternate arrangements. Given the complexity of conflict in the 1990s, where a multitude of security threats, acting alone or in combination, may threaten international peace and security, the peacekeeping force which responds must possess diverse capabilities. As events in Bosnia and Namibia have shown, traditional peacekeeping methods, buttressed by peacebuilding, are necessary to rebuild and restore a war-torn society to long-term self-sufficiency. Increasingly, states recognize the benefits of the New Peacekeeping Partnership (NPP). NPP is the term applied to the military, government, and non-government agencies dealing with humanitarian assistance, refugees, displaced persons, election monitors, media, and civilian police personnel as they work together to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.¹⁶ This concept was developed by the Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, an independent institution established by the Government of Canada in 1994, to enhance the Canadian contribution to international peace, security and stability. The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre fulfills this mandate through research, education, and training in all aspects of peacekeeping.

Clearly, this inclusive approach is not only responsive, but flexible. The partnership is configurable to the unique requirements of each mission, and various non-military actors may pool their efforts with the Blue Helmets and create a truly integrated peacekeeping and peacebuilding "force." Although a coordinated effort between the partners may not necessarily imply integration under a single authority, the NPP concept allows the constituents of the force to draw upon one another's experience and strengths. With this concept under constant development at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, an important new dimension has been added to the debate over how best to meet the security challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

Conclusion

It is questionable whether the idea of a permanent army for U.N. operations has ever been seriously regarded as a viable tool for conflict management. It has certainly generated a significant amount of interest by scholars, statesmen, and the media, and its emotional appeal is still strong. But the barriers to its adoption have historically been, and arguably still are, insurmountable. The spirit of cooperation which, it was hoped, would characterize the post-Cold War international system has not materi-

16. See Morrison, *supra* note 1.

alized. This spirit is not, however, non-existent. While national interest and a fear of costly entanglements has dampened enthusiasm, there is broad agreement that existing measures can and should be improved. In the near-term, it is unlikely that these improvements (if they are made) will take the form of a greater willingness to allocate resources to a U.N. volunteer reserve, since national interest and national control are, for many states, synonymous. But if the ultimate objective is to improve the chances of mission success, other alternatives (including an operational headquarters with regional branches) and improvements to existing arrangements (through the New Peacekeeping Partnership) may have much to offer.

One or more of these alternatives may result from an initiative launched by Canada at the 49th session of the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA). Its aim is to suggest improvements in the rapid reaction capability of the United Nations. The study has encompassed three multi-day meetings designed to explore all facets of the subject, prepare a draft report, and consult with many U.N. Member States. According to the Canadian Minister of National Defence, some of the matters being considered include:

- (1) the possibility of establishing a standing operational headquarters to conduct operational planning for peace support missions;
- (2) means of improving existing standby arrangements and of defining the potential relationship between an operational headquarters and the military and civilian organizations that might, in an emergency, come under its direction;
- (3) ways to standardize training; and
- (4) ways in which the organization of security and cooperation in the European code of conduct are adaptable to the needs of the United Nations.¹⁷

The final report of the study will be presented to the 50th session of the UNGA. Other countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium are pursuing similar initiatives.

It is virtually certain that the United Nations will not establish a permanent military force. However, out of this current round of studies and discussions will come a renewed interest in making the United Nations more effective. That, in itself, is no mean feat.

17. Honourable David Collenette, PC, MP, Minister of National Defence, *Enhancing UN Rapid Reaction Capability: The Importance of Practical Proposals*, Address at the International Conference on U.N. Rapid Reaction Capability (Apr. 7, 1995) (on file with author).