

Picking Up the Peaces: The UN's Evolving Postconflict Roles

The recent war against Saddam Hussein neither destroyed nor discredited the United Nations. Although French efforts failed to dissuade the Bush administration from its chosen course of action, the role of the UN's humanitarian agencies in Iraq was not affected. Since the end of major combat, they have carried much of the load in caring for and feeding the Iraqi people and restoring public services. The UN has a political role to play there as well, drawing on years of experience in devising democratic education campaigns, giving electoral advice, and conducting elections in war-torn developing countries. A decade of sanctions may have left the UN less than popular among some Iraqis as a political interlocutor, but could the main enforcers of the sanctions—the United States and United Kingdom—be any more popular? They are, at the moment, the occupying forces; by comparison, the UN is a reasonably disinterested third party that can more easily listen to local opinions and adapt to the aspirations of Iraq's citizens.

Beyond Iraq, it is a big and hurting world. Conflicts in Sudan and Sri Lanka are coming to an end; conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire threaten to upend the peace from Guinea to Ghana; parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain in bloody anarchy despite peace accords; third-generation narco-guerrillas control a substantial part of Colombia, while democracy is fragile in several other Andean states; and thuggish regimes in Zimbabwe, Myanmar, and North Korea continue to repress their citizens, crushing their countries' economies in the process. In addition, the droughts and food crises in eastern and southern Africa owe their origins to a combination of climate and politics. The United States cannot and probably will not give its full attention to these other crisis zones, whether the need is for

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peacekeepers or aid providers. The world's other powers have even more limited capabilities than Washington, and regional organizations outside Europe have as yet little operational capacity. So, short of writing off millions of people in the poorest and worst-governed parts of the world ... who you gonna call?

As often as not, governments call the UN. When President George W. Bush speaks of the UN, even when addressing the General Assembly and all

The UN is much more than the Security Council in postconflict settings.

190 other UN members, he means the Security Council, that is, the 15 member states that can define threats to international peace and security and obligate member states to act against these threats. The UN is, however, much more than the Security Council or the General Assembly, especially in postconflict settings. It is also a loosely structured, increasingly well-coordinated system of operating agencies that protect refugees, distribute emergency food, immunize children, promote human rights, and organize

peacekeepers as well as political and electoral advisers for states in distress or in transition from war to peace.

The UN is uniquely equipped with the legitimacy, experience, coordinating ability, and logistics mechanisms to work in postconflict settings, potentially as a partner with regional organizations as their operational capacities evolve. This assumes that developed states—the UN's principal source of cash and operational backup—remain politically engaged and operationally supportive of UN postconflict activities.

UN humanitarian agencies such as the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the World Food Program (WFP) have standing mandates to help in humanitarian emergencies. With the acquiescence of governing authorities and a sufficiently permissive security environment, they can act quickly during a crisis. Several agencies have emergency procedures designed to dispatch rapid response teams within 24 hours of a crisis. More than 90 percent of UN humanitarian agencies' funding takes the form of voluntary contributions from governments, however, so although humanitarian agencies have the authority to act quickly, they may only have the reserve funds to act briefly, unless sustaining funds materialize.

UN political, security, and development entities, on the other hand, from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to the World Bank, need a Security Council resolution that specifically mandates action (in the case of DPKO) or otherwise gives a signal that it is legally permissible for them to engage. Their funding, on the other hand, comes largely from the

“assessed” contributions of member states, which those states are obligated to pay under the terms of their membership in the UN or the World Bank.

The United Nations and Iraq

Both the humanitarian and the political/development arms of the operational UN faced something of a quandary as the Iraq war approached. Because there was no agreement within the system that the Security Council had authorized military action—interpretation of old resolutions to that effect by the U.S. and British governments notwithstanding—the operational UN faced the dilemma of preparing for a seemingly inevitable conflict that it was not authorized to recognize as such. As much as Washington would like to believe that the UN is or ought to be an arm of U.S. foreign policy, UN staff serve the secretary general or, in the case of operating agencies, their respective agency leaderships; those leaders respond in turn to what the UN's member states collectively ask them to do. All UN employees attempt to do their jobs with studied (and self-protective) political neutrality, aware that the sovereign equality and international law that underpin the political UN exist in uneasy tension with the disparities of wealth and power in the international system at large.

The looming crisis in Iraq thus posed a dilemma for the operational UN: prepare for the war and risk being (further) tarred as U.S. toadies by the UN's majority; or await events and risk an avalanche of criticism should war trigger a major humanitarian emergency for which the system was unprepared, as was the case for UNHCR when it underestimated expulsions from Kosovo in the spring of 1999. In the case of Iraq, by late 2002 the potential humanitarian stakes appeared so high, including possible mass displacement of civilians and the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), that the political risks associated with moving too soon seemed to pale in comparison. Four months prior to the war, therefore, under the direction of UN deputy secretary general Louise Frechette, the organization took the unusual step of actively developing interagency planning assumptions and alternatives relating to the possible course of war in Iraq to better marshal the people and goods that might be needed on relatively short notice.¹

On the eve of the war, the UN issued guidelines to its field agencies on their interactions with coalition forces and agencies. Operating under the authority of the UN's humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, agencies were instructed to “retain full control” of UN operations inside and outside Iraq, to maintain freedom of movement, not to allow themselves to be integrated into military planning, and to maintain independent access to communications. Aid distribution was to remain on a need-only basis, that is, politically impartial.²

Security concerns involved the risk of not only getting caught in the cross fire but also being seen as too close to one military force or another—visible association with belligerent forces in war zones could mark humanitarian actors as belligerents themselves—resulting in a loss in security for the agencies’ people and programs. To avoid overlapping with or complicating military operations, the agencies were nonetheless encouraged to establish liaisons with coalition forces and to share information on humanitarian

plans and intentions, on routes and timing of convoys, and on population movements.

UN personnel were prohibited from working in the same premises as military forces or inside the coalition’s Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) facilities, from participating in HOC public events (such as press conferences), or from issuing standing invitations for UN coordination meetings to military representatives. UN staff members were prohibited from using “military assets of belliger-

ent forces in humanitarian operations except under extreme and exceptional circumstances” and then only when civilian assets were unavailable. The same considerations applied to military escorts. Authorization or endorsement of the use of force by the Security Council at the war’s outset would likely have relaxed some of these restrictions, which applied even to UN humanitarian agencies such as the WFP that reentered the country as soon as security conditions and the coalition permitted in late April, a week before the declared end of major combat. International staff returned first to the relatively more stable northern governorates (primarily the Kurdish-controlled areas) and on May 1 to Baghdad itself, rejoining Iraqi UN staff who had remained in-country throughout the war. Once the Security Council passed Resolution 1483, the UN’s political elements and the World Bank could reengage fully in Iraq as well and could deal with the U.S.-led coalition as the *de jure* government.

Efforts must change not only Iraq’s governing structures but also Iraqis’ mindsets.

SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1483

During the winter of 2003, the Security Council was deeply divided over whether to authorize the use of force against Iraq. U.S. and British government efforts to draft such a resolution foundered when France threatened to veto any resolution, regardless of specific content. Once the war commenced, the infighting continued, and France and Russia threatened to block resolutions that would have lifted sanctions on Iraq before accounting for its WMD and feared that regime change could void their financial claims

against Saddam's government. Yet, they also wanted access to Iraqi oil resources, and international brokers would not buy Iraq's oil without clear title. Until the council said otherwise, the only legitimate international sales were by the Iraqi government through the UN Oil-for-Food Program.

Thus, after several weeks of bluster and diplomacy over how sanctions would be ended, who would control Iraqi oil resources, and what role the UN should have in postwar reconstruction, the Security Council approved Resolution 1483, which provided for lifting economic sanctions, gracefully phasing out the Oil-for-Food Program, acknowledging (but not authorizing) the United States and United Kingdom as occupying powers under the Geneva Conventions, and inviting other powers into Iraq to work with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to maintain security and stability in the country. The Security Council also mandated a UN special representative of the secretary general (SRSG) to serve as the organization's chief political representative and overall coordinator in Iraq but especially to work "intensively with the Authority, the people of Iraq, and others concerned" to "restore and establish" representative governance in postwar Iraq.³ Establishing representative governance in Iraq, where no government has ever been representative of the population at large, is a tough task, one that immediately proved difficult for chief provisional administrator L. Paul Bremer. The Pentagon had been adamant that this task remain under U.S. control, but as early as March, prior to the start of the war, elements of the Bush administration were making a case that the UN name a high political representative for Iraq, specifically Sergio Vieira de Mello, the recently appointed UN high commissioner for human rights—not to take over the process of governing but to bring hands-on experience to the task. Just days after Resolution 1483 was adopted, UN secretary general Kofi Annan appointed de Mello as his SRSG.

Division of Labor

In addition to providing basic security throughout Iraq via coalition forces and, from roughly July onward, reconstituted Iraqi police forces, the CPA worked to repair basic infrastructure, especially the power grid and the oil production and distribution system, primarily through U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) contracts with U.S. firms such as Bechtel. UN agencies—also drawing on contributions from USAID; its British counterpart, the Department for International Development; and other national donors—focused on immediate aid to people and on assistance in repairing infrastructure that was critical to public health (food distribution and production, power, water, sewage, immunization, and dredging out the

deepwater port of Umm Qasr to facilitate shipments of aid supplies). Several different agencies engaged in these tasks, working under the overall direction of the UN Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, which also sponsors an online Humanitarian Information Center to help coordinate the work of 86 international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working in the country.⁴ In several areas, the UN's postwar work built upon programs that had been underway in Iraq for several years. The most prominent of these was the Oil-for-Food Program.

Reorienting the Oil-for-Food Program

In August 1990, four days after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, the Security Council passed Resolution 661, which imposed sanctions on Iraq and effectively shut off legal exports of Iraqi oil. The serious humanitarian implications of eliminating the country's primary export led the council to offer successive programs to permit the export of oil to fund food imports without undercutting the rest of the sanctions regime. Iraq rejected the offer made in Resolution 706 (August 1991) and objected to the terms laid out in Resolution 986 (April 1995) but over the following year negotiated a memorandum of understanding with the UN Secretariat that allowed Iraqi oil exports to begin again in December 1996, under what came to be known as the Oil-for-Food Program. The first shipments of food supplies financed by the program arrived in Iraq in March 1997. The UN's Office of the Iraq Program (OIP), established to monitor Iraqi compliance with the UN sanctions regime, also managed the Oil-for-Food Program and the activities of UN agencies that implemented it in the country's three northern governorates. In the central and southern regions of Iraq, distribution of food and medicine purchased through the program was managed by the government itself. Every six months, the government would send to OIP its plans for how oil revenues would be used and how goods and services thus purchased would be distributed. Government contracts were scrutinized for contraband material, but once approved, internal distribution was in the Iraqi government's hands. The Oil-for-Food Program used some 46,000 distribution points within central and southern Iraq and another 10,000 in the three northern districts to reach a majority of the population with monthly food packets.⁵

Control over the program changed hands in March 2003 when the council passed Resolution 1472, which gave full management authority to Annan for 45 days. With that authority, the UN could put different priorities on contracts and redirect shipments of what was most needed to regions where it was most needed. About \$1 billion of high-priority items was in the OIP system when U.S. forces rolled across the Kuwait-Iraq border. Resolution

1483 extended UN management of the Oil-for-Food Program for another six months to permit the orderly phasing out of the program; permit the development of alternative feeding and jobs programs for Iraqis who were being sustained by the program; and transfer to the CPA the clear authority over Iraq's oil industry as well as clear title to sell its products on world markets and to deposit them in a newly created Development Fund for Iraq. Under the new arrangement, up to 95 percent of oil sales revenues will go toward development of the country, up from 72 percent under the Oil-for-Food Program.⁶

Some parts of the UN system that have proved most effective following the war in Iraq have been well versed in their role, oriented toward emergency response for a long time. The WFP is the UN's primary transport arm for humanitarian aid and manages, at any given time, 40 cargo ships, 20 cargo aircraft, and hundreds of heavy-lift trucks to deliver some four million tons of foodstuffs annually worldwide.⁷ The first WFP distributions through the Oil-for-Food Program since the end of the war began on June 1. By mid-July, WFP had brought in 1.4 million tons of food—about 80 percent of the way toward its goal of 1.8 million tons by the end of September.⁸

WFP is not only distributing food coming from outside Iraq but also working to sustain and encourage food production within the country by purchasing goods from Iraqi farmers. In late May, WFP arranged to transfer \$150 million from the Oil-for-Food Program to finance the Iraqi Ministry of Trade's purchases of wheat from farmers under WFP supervision.⁹ WFP's emphasis on self-sufficiency in Iraq reflects years of lessons learned in running food programs in other postconflict societies, where free international deliveries often destroyed what remained of local agricultural markets.

WFP is also responsible for managing UN logistics and air transport in Iraq. In early June, the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) began flights to Iraq from Kuwait and Jordan for UN staff and critical supplies such as communications equipment. WFP also runs the UN Joint Logistics Center, an interagency enterprise that reports to the UN Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator; tracks and facilitates air, marine, and overland transport; and provides online reports on customs and border crossing requirements, fuel availability by locality, seaport and airport access, and UNHAS flight schedules. Similar joint logistics centers have been established for UN operations in Afghanistan and Côte d'Ivoire.¹⁰

The UN has conducted a number of successful democracy education campaigns.

REFUGEES

By the 1970s, UNHCR, created in the early 1950s to protect and assist individuals fleeing Communist persecution, had shifted its focus to providing mass care for refugees in camp settings. It currently provides assistance to about 21 million refugees and displaced persons worldwide. During the winter of 2003, UNHCR and other refugee organizations prepared for an exodus of as many as 1.3 million people from Iraq after the war started by creating large holding camps in Jordan, which, as it turned out, were not needed.

Nevertheless, there are an estimated 500,000 Iraqi refugees around the world and about 800,000 internally displaced persons as a result of previous conflicts and Iraqi government relocation policies, all of whom may want to go home. For displaced Kurds, home was probably occupied years ago by Iraqi Arabs at the direction of the regime, a segment of the population that is now itself being displaced as the Kurds begin to return. The Iraqi government's pogroms and marsh-draining programs drove out the southern Marsh Arabs in the early 1990s, after their uprising against Saddam. A real return to their homes and traditional way of life would require reflooding the marshlands in the south and regrowing the materials from which their homes were built. In short, finding durable solutions to the problems of Iraq's displaced populations will not be an easy task. Still, UN agencies' experience in evolving such solutions far exceeds those of the CPA and its contractors.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Created in 1946 to help the destitute children of post-World War II Europe, the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) now operates in developing countries where it works to protect children and women from malnutrition, preventable disease, and intentional violence. In Iraq, UNICEF is restarting immunization programs that broke down when military strikes caused power failures that in turn prevented the cold storage of vaccines. In the 90 days that immunization was suspended, an estimated 210,000 Iraqi infants were born, each of whom needed vaccination. By mid-June, UNICEF had begun vaccinating Iraqi infants and children against polio, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough, measles, and tuberculosis.¹¹ UNICEF collaborated with the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to get six million Iraqi children back to school in time to complete their year-end exams, and the two agencies are working with the CPA and Iraq's Ministry of Education to "de-Ba'th" the school system's textbooks. UNICEF also closely coordinates its activities with those of the WFP, deter-

mining childrens' nutritional needs and delivering the assistance with logistical support from WFP, which in turn sees to the food needs of adults.¹²

DEVELOPMENT

What used to be called the “relief to development continuum,” with relief efforts coming first and development programs following later, is now seen instead as a set of parallel tracks that allows and even invites relief and development measures to overlap in time. Thus, for example, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization is working to promote local crop and livestock production in Iraq by providing spare parts for farm machinery, pesticides, and immunization of livestock, while the WFP has begun to buy food from Iraqi farmers for delivery to Iraq's majority urban population—rural development facilitating simultaneous urban relief. Similarly, the UN Development Program (UNDP) manages the Iraq Rehabilitation and Employment Program, which creates labor-intensive reconstruction projects that provide immediate, temporary employment for up to 250,000 Iraqis on “road repair, repair and construction of schools, cleaning of river beds, repair of healthcare centres, rehabilitation of drain channels, recycling and removal of rubble, rehabilitation of irrigation channels,” and repair of water supply systems and sewage and sanitation systems. Finally, drawing on roughly \$44 million in funds from the Oil-for-Food Program, UNDP contractors dredged Umm Qasr, Iraq's only deepwater port, once again making it usable as an entry port for humanitarian supplies.¹³

The UN can demonstrate the benefits of the kind of future Washington envisions for Iraq.

GOVERNANCE

Of all high-ranking UN officials, de Mello has the most experience in building or rebuilding governments. For nearly three years before taking the UN's chief human rights post, he had been the UN's transitional administrator for East Timor and, before that, had jump-started the UN's first full-fledged governance mission, in Kosovo. In East Timor, he learned how to run a small country while helping local political leaders with no experience in the democratic process learn at the same time.

Resolution 1483 directed the new UN SRSG to coordinate the UN's activities in Iraq and UN operations with those of other agencies; promote the safe and orderly return of refugees; facilitate reconstruction of Iraq's infra-

structure; promote economic reconstruction and sustainable development; encourage international efforts to establish civil administration and rebuild the Iraqi police, legal, and judicial systems; and promote human rights, in addition to the previously noted mandate to work “intensively” with the CPA and the people of Iraq on representative governance. Of these responsibilities, only this last assignment is more than hortatory. De Mello clearly

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recognizes that and has focused on governance issues from his first day in Iraq. He immediately set out on a listening tour of the country, meeting with local leaders of all stripes, from conservative mullahs to the head of the Iraqi Communist Party, absorbing the wants and needs of Iraqis in all parts of the country and consulting frequently with Bremer. Such relatively self-effacing surveying is something

that the United States is not especially good at and where the UN and de Mello—because they are not in charge—can make a contribution to getting local governance right.

Although the new SRSG has some advisory personnel with him, thus far he has no formal UN office or operation supporting him, nor does he have a formal budget. Instead, he probably draws upon the secretary general’s small annual contingency fund to make his mission function. It is likely, however, that the SRSG will eventually report to the Security Council, summarizing what the team has learned about Iraqi politics and aspirations and recommending a larger UN political mission to help set up Iraqi governance structures. Efforts to establish representative government will likely entail setting up and supervising municipal elections around the country in coordination with the CPA, to be followed by elections of governors, counterpart legislative councils, and an assembly to craft and present a new Iraqi constitution for ratification by governorates and the Iraqi population at large. To assist in this task, de Mello’s mission would likely draw in part upon the UN Volunteers (UNVs)—the UN’s equivalent of the Peace Corps—which maintains rosters of individuals with various technical and administrative expertise. UNVs have been used extensively and successfully in UN missions in Kosovo, East Timor, and elsewhere.

The roots of democracy in the Arab world are neither broad nor deep, and the roots of Iraqi nationalism are equally shallow compared to sectional or tribal loyalties. Saddam’s regime cultivated those loyalties for a generation, culling the opposition by stealth and force. Relatively few Iraqis will remember when political life was any different. If the grand experiment in democratic social change now underway in Iraq is to have any chance of success, it

must change not only Iraq's governing structures but also Iraqis' mindsets. This will not happen overnight but must start at the local level, even as the CPA attempts to reconstitute Iraqi governance from the top down.¹⁴ A realistic public information campaign is needed to lay out the range of political options and opportunities for a public with no experience of democracy beyond Saddam's vanity elections. The UN has conducted a number of successful democracy-education campaigns for first-time voters in postconflict situations over the past 15 years and could undertake its biggest effort yet in Iraq. If the CPA were to delegate campaign management to the UN, to implement it with the assistance of international NGOs, well-trained local staff, and UN oversight, the process would have greater local and international credibility than if conducted by the occupying authority itself, even though the CPA would necessarily have the last word regarding implementation.

The CPA, in turn, would best generate Iraqi support for the kinds of political outcomes the United States would like to achieve by delivering beneficial public services and facilitating the rebirth of a well-regulated market economy that generates jobs; in other words, it would demonstrate the benefits of the kind of future Washington envisions for Iraq. Iraqis will get the idea and support it, provided those loyal to the old regime can be controlled without seriously damaging the CPA's relations with the population at large.

Both the political and the operational UN have played significant roles in the reconstruction of Iraq to date. On the political side, the Security Council lifted international economic sanctions, created a soft landing for the Oil-for-Food Program, highlighted that the United States and United Kingdom are occupying powers under international law, and gave the UN a serious role in the establishment of representative governance.

On the operational side, the UN's humanitarian and development agencies have been working to improve the health and well-being of the Iraqi people, including the rehabilitation of the public health infrastructure, while the CPA provides security and its contractors tackle the biggest physical reconstruction jobs. The UN's actions related to governance have, so far, been limited to de Mello's extensive initial consultations, but the UN's experience in other war-to-peace transitions mean that it has much more to offer in this area, if invited to do so.

Winning the Peace in the Rest of the World

Iraq may mark a turning point in how the more prosperous parts of the world address collapsed, failing, or predatory governments, aside from the issue of forceful removal of the old regime. Substantial efforts are being made to change Iraqi politics, economics, and perhaps society; and the chief occu-

pying power professes to be in it for the long haul. This level of involvement and this policy attitude both stand in marked contrast to the 1990s, when the United States and others focused on exit strategy as much or more than they focused on the needs of a mission.

Many of the mistakes of the past 10 years in peacekeeping and nation building had to do with leaving too soon or doing too little rather than with staying too long or doing too much. Thus, the United States and NATO, after waiting three years to impose peace in Bosnia, failed to round up the perpetrators of the conflict and failed to take charge of law enforcement. As a result, the criminal elements enveloped the economy like kudzu on a light pole. More recently, coalition forces imposed peace in Afghanistan. The perpetrators of the country's romance with terrorism were driven from power but still harass the transitional government, which is wholly dependent on outside largesse. President Hamid Karzai's U.S. backers have not helped him enforce key provisions of the agreement that defines the peace process, such as demilitarization of Kabul, so that even Afghanistan's capital is controlled by the president's rivals.

Extended commitment requires extensive resources. The paradox of a successful makeover in Iraq thus may be that the international community finds that it cannot afford success, at least as produced by present models of intervention.

Not every postwar setting, however, is an imposed peace like Iraq. Because the United States tends to get involved militarily only when a heavy hand is needed (for example, in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq), Americans tend to forget that, in most of the places where the UN has worked on war-to-peace transitions, the local parties have invited it in as the principal implementing partner of a peace agreement that ends a war nobody could win. Yet, war-ending political deals may require half-beaten regimes or insurgencies to enter into power-sharing arrangements with their erstwhile enemies or to accept the novel concept of being removed from office by (unarmed) voters. Some signatories may decide after a few months that the whole undertaking was a mistake, or they may have signed on originally for some tactical advantage that does not pan out. Some groups who sign an accord may even splinter into factions with violently differing views about the value of peace.¹⁵ The UN's historical strength has been in reinforcing voluntary compliance with such agreements. The UN's weakness, historically, has been its inability to deal effectively with such defections.

Any outside force charged with implementing peace must come prepared to deal with a "spoiler" or not bother to deploy. The first analyst to emphasize this was Stephen John Stedman, then at Johns Hopkins University and now at Stanford University,¹⁶ whose conclusions were picked up by the UN's

Brahimi report, issued in August 2000, which proposed major revisions in policies and support structures for UN peacekeeping missions.¹⁷ Over the past three years, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations has grown by 50 percent, in line with the report's recommendations, and has implemented many structural and policy changes intended to promote rapid and effective deployment of peacekeeping operations. Overall, the UN now has far better capability to support strenuous peacekeeping missions than it had even two years ago.¹⁸

Still, the muscle in UN operations comes from its member states; the UN itself has no troops or police. European countries, which used to contribute forces to UN operations and have the capacity to contribute some of the best forces to difficult missions, have chosen to contribute their forces primarily to operations run by NATO and the European Union instead. The United States, rarely a major troop contributor to UN operations but always a major political supporter, financier, and logistical backstop, currently prefers even looser arrangements: coalitions of the willing that are the military equivalent of pickup basketball.

Such choices limit UN effectiveness in the more difficult postconflict settings because the developing countries that now provide most UN peacekeepers by and large lack the transport and support forces and the communications and intelligence resources necessary to deal with a situation where one or more local parties choose to undermine the peace. Were this situation to change and, for example, French troop contributions to places such as Côte d'Ivoire or the Democratic Republic of the Congo were made under UN rather than EU or national colors, UN operations would be able to provide effective postconflict security umbrellas under which peace implementation could go forward.

Aside from the question of military efficacy, there are issues of burden and risk sharing. The UN is a universal membership organization. Although its wealthier members shoulder virtually all of the financial costs of UN peacekeeping, the burden of risk falls on its poorer members at the moment. Developed states may argue that they should not have to pay the piper and dance as well, but "checkbook diplomacy" is so widely disdained that even Japan is edging away from it and toward contributions in kind to UN operations, that is, tangible goods and services such as troops, advisers, and transport.

Developing states can also argue that, because the UN's wealthier members have a stake in regional stability, they should be sharing the risk as well

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as the cost of maintaining or restoring it. Developed states are, in fact, doing so in Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Afghanistan, just not as blue-helmeted UN troops. Developed states do contribute troops to UN operations—around 5,000 as of June 2003, or roughly 15 percent of the total. Yet, their distribution is striking: developed states contribute 55 percent of the troops in the old, established UN operations in the Middle East (Cyprus, Golan Heights, and Lebanon); and 59 percent of UN troops in Asia (East Timor); but less than six percent of UN troops in Africa (Sierra Leone, Congo, and the Ethiopia-Eritrea border).¹⁹

Developed states contribute less than six percent of UN troops in Africa.

The issue is not necessarily one of avoiding Security Council control because the NATO-run peacekeeping forces in Kosovo and in Kabul both have council mandates. Unspoken concerns may derive from a number of sources—regional prevalence of HIV, for example—but may focus on mission leadership—the SRSG, Force Commander, and their deputies; how they were selected; and whether they can be relied on to

carry out the mission professionally and impartially—not just regarding the local parties but regarding the various nationalities and specialties within the mission itself. The Brahimi report argued that managerial competence and leadership ability should count at least as heavily as political ties and national origin in the appointment of mission leaders, but of the many areas where the report recommended change, this one may show the least amount of visible movement. Until it does, developed states may continue to be reluctant to contribute much-needed forces to the more difficult UN peace operations, which at present are those in Africa.

Operations in Kosovo have demonstrated that it is possible to have parallel civilian and military operations—one UN, the other not—that function with mutual respect and support. This model, however, can be implemented only with developed-state forces or with ad hoc arrangements to compensate less-wealthy troop contributors because there is no regular mechanism for reimbursing troop contributors' costs outside the UN system.

Whatever the precise structure of the peacekeeping security umbrella, allowing peacebuilders to go about their work with a modicum of safety is necessary in many postconflict situations. UN agencies and programs stand ready to do that work, together with national aid organizations and NGOs, in war-torn societies around the globe. Clean water, child health, land mine removal, food and agricultural aid, refugee repatriation, human rights investigations, electoral advice, and election conduct—all are products of UN work. Although the political UN is an intergovernmental organization—its

members are states and its principal clients are the governments of those states—the operational organization increasingly reaches out to people and deals with human security. This is an evolving model of action that many member states may not have noticed. Like human rights, it has taken time to gain momentum, but that momentum is now considerable. Detractors who dismiss these people-oriented goals and the UN's tendency toward “consensus and peace” and who believe that special forces and expeditionary air power can set the world right are not looking at the whole problem. They see the war but ignore the postwar, and as a result, they miss a big part of the solution as well.

Notes

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2. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “General Guidance for Interaction Between United Nations Personnel and Military and Other Representatives of the Belligerent Parties in the Context of the Crisis in Iraq,” April 9, 2003, www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/s/96433123DA7412DB85256D08007393EE (accessed July 21, 2003).
3. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483, May 22, 2003, para. 8c.
4. Located at www.agoodplacetostart.org.
5. United Nations Office of the Iraq Program (OIP), “In Brief,” “Programme Chronology,” and “Fact Sheet,” www.un.org/Depts/oip/background/index.html (accessed July 12, 2003).
6. Resolution 1483 cuts the percentage of oil export revenues channeled to the Compensation Fund for claims against Iraq arising out of the 1991 Persian Gulf War from 25 percent to just 5 percent. The UN's cost of administering the program was 2.2 percent. UNMOVIC was allocated 0.8 percent. UNSCR 1483, paras. 20–21. See OIP, www.un.org/Depts/oip/index.html (accessed July 21, 2003).
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8. WFP, “Regional Emergency Operation 10259.0,” www.wfp.org (accessed June 10, 2003). See “WFP Emergency Report No. 28 of 2003,” June 11, 2003, www.reliefweb.int (accessed July 12, 2003).
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