

CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM TO GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY¹

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Abstract

The primary objective of the paper will be to evaluate and argument increasing role and contribution of the United Nations (UN) in the process of global peace and security since its establishment. The paper will critically evaluate the trends and the impact that the UN had in the past and has currently in the process and the system of the global peace and security. This started with “both the League and the UN reflected convictions that a permanent international organization made up of all peace-loving states could prevent future wars”,² it was supposed to ensure the goal that that the atrocities committed during the both World Wars will never be repeated again in human history.

Keywords: United Nations, Peace and Security, UN charter.

Preserving international peace and security, cooperating in international sphere in solving problems and respect for human rights are good examples and initiatives in reaching harmony amongst nations in the world. Although the notion of global peace and security is relatively a new concept, “the idea of global organisation to promote security among states was born in the early years of the twentieth century and promoted by prominent statesman and peace

¹ review scientific paper

²John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens (eds), Globalization of World Politics, An Introduction to International Relations 4th Edition, Oxford (pg 314)

groups during World Wars I and II”.³To achieve this difficult assignment the UN Charter depicts that , “...the UN had four purposes: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international problems in promoting respect for human rights; and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations”.⁴ As there was an increase need for global peace and security in order to secure a peaceful environment and because of global terrorist threats and environmental issues “the UN was expected to take on a stronger role in maintaining standards for individuals within states”.⁵

UN Charter in Article 43, emphasises that “all Members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security”.⁶As a consequence, “the UN Security Council was given the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and Security”⁷and undoubtedly, “it assumes that potential aggressors will be deterred by united threat or counterforce mobilized through an international organization like the League or the UN”.⁸In doing so, the “UN charter is clear that the Security Council has the sole authority to authorize the use of force and to obligate member states to undertake sanctions, except in situations where states may exercise their right of individual or collective self-defence”.⁹Further, the UN Charter, Article 51 states that “nothing in the present Charter shall

³Margaret P. Karns, Karen A. Mingst, International Organizations, The Politics and Processes of Global Governance, 2nd Edition, Reinner (pg 295)

⁴John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens, Globalization of World Politics, An Introduction to International Relations 4th Edition, Oxford (pg 321)

⁵Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VII: Actions with Respect to Threats to Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression, Article 43 (available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>)

⁶John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens, Globalization of World Politics, An Introduction to International Relations 4th Edition, Oxford (pg 315)

⁷Margaret P. Karns, Karen A. Mingst, International Organizations, The Politics and Processes of Global Governance, 2nd Edition, Reinner (pg 311)

⁸Margaret P. Karns, Karen A. Mingst, International Organizations, The Politics and Processes of Global Governance, 2nd Edition, Reinner (pg 296)

⁹Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VII: Actions with Respect to Threats to Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression, Article 51 (available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>)

impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of United Nations, until Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security”.¹⁰

In doing so, for the “measures taken by Members in exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time actions as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security”.¹¹ As stated above, the UN Charter, has “given the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security”¹² to the UN Security Council. The Security Council is composed of five permanent members (USA, Russia, France, Britain, China), and ten non-permanent members. In cases “when the Security Council considers a threat to international peace, it explores ways to settle the dispute peacefully under terms of the Chapter VI of the UN Charter”¹³, “...additionally “the Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security”.¹⁴ Article 37 of the UN Charter, goes further by noting that “if the Security Council deems that the continuance of the dispute is in fact likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, it shall decide whether to take action under 36 or to recommend such terms of settlement as it may consider appropriate”.¹⁵ In this case conflicts might be solved by using measures of economic influence (embargo/sanctions), or in some cases with military actions or sending peacekeeping missions to these turbulent areas, but all of this has to be approved by the UN Security Council. The “United Nations peacekeeping is a unique and dynamic instrument developed by the Organization as a way to help countries torn by conflict create the conditions for lasting peace”.¹⁶

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens, Globalization of World Politics, An Introduction to International Relations 4th Edition, Oxford (pg 315)

¹² Ibid

¹³Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VI: Pacific Settlement of Disputes, Article 34 (available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter6.shtml>)

¹⁴Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VI: Pacific Settlement of Disputes, Article 37 (available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter6.shtml>)

¹⁵United Nations Peacekeeping, (available at: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping>)

¹⁶ Ibid

One of the first UN peacekeeping missions “was established in 1948, when the Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours”.¹⁷ As demonstrated above, “the UN established several programs intended to reduce, as much as possible, all the factors leading to outbreaks of conflicts”¹⁸, thus has contributed to restoring peace and security in troubled areas, regions or countries. The UN and the Security Council did not only deal with issues of peace keeping missions and operations/interventions, “but also on economic and social development, human rights, and struggle end world poverty and hunger”¹⁹, issues which are in most of the mostly fuel the start of any conflict or regional disturbances. The peace keeping missions allow the United Nations through the “Security Council to watch over the cease-fire and participate in the creation of conditions for peace”²⁰. Nonetheless, “despite the growth in UN activities, however there are some questions about the relevance and effectiveness of the UN”²¹, in reaching peace and stability in areas and countries disturbed by conflicts between states and nations, like the case with the Somalia. In this country the UN intervened with “a contingent of 500 lightly armed Pakistani peacekeeping troops, deployed in August 1992 as the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) with a mandate to protect relief workers, proved totally inadequate for the task at hand”.²²

Consequently, “...Somalia is also a symbol of a failed UN post-Cold War peacekeeping effort and a set of lessons, rightly or wrongly, for peacekeeping in situations of state failure, civil war and complex humanitarian disaster”, thus hugely was impacting the credibility of the UN in the eyes of public opinion when it comes to ensuring global peace and stability in the planet. The, “overall, the UN’s record on the maintenance of international peace and security has been mixed, compared to the enthusiasm about the potential for

¹⁷United Nations and Culture of Peace, (available at: <http://www.unac.org/peacecp/factsheet/role.html#The%20Other%20UN%20Organizations%20That%20Contribute%20to%20Peace>)

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens, Globalization of World Politics, An Introduction to International Relations 4th Edition, Oxford (pg 314)

²¹Margaret P. Karns, Karen A. Mingst, International Organizations, The Politics and Processes of Global Governance, 2nd Edition, Reinner (pg 289)

²²John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens, Globalization of World Politics, An Introduction to International Relations 4th Edition, Oxford (pg 324)

the UN in the early 1990s”.²³ Some argue that the case with the Somalia’s intervention is because “the UN was slow to react because the Security Council assumed that it needed consent of the Somali warlords to provide humanitarian assistance as in traditional peacekeeping operations”²⁴ , thus the delays in reaction caused many life’s and loss of credibility of the actions of the UN. Still, the UN has made a lot of progress in this field and that often we tend to neglect the successes and rather concentrate in failures that the UN has had overtime in reactions in cases of armed conflicts. One of the most successful UN peacekeeping missions is considered to be Sierra Leone, in implementing the countries peace agreement after the war that occurred.

Conclusion

Reaching peace and security needs a multi-actor approach, no organisation or body can do it on its own, and UN has contributed in the process global peace and security. The successes that were reached in the case of Salvador, Namibia and Mozambique and peace keeping efforts in Kashmir area are symbols of progress in this field. Peacekeeping operations authorised by UN, cost this organization with, “more than 1,780 UN peacekeepers died in service of international peace and security between 1945 and 2002”.²⁵ The impact and success of the United Nations system on peace and security can be possibly best portrayed through the example that “the United Nations peacekeeping forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998”.²⁶ Therefore, many sceptics criticize UN efforts. But “no matter how much the UN is criticized for it’s so far performance, no sane person can fully deny the great services of this Organization for the betterment of humankind”.²⁷ This can be best “judged by the people of Africa whom were helped by the UN when they

²³Margaret P. Karns, Karen A. Mingst, International Organizations, The Politics and Processes of Global Governance, 2nd Edition, Reinner (pg 289)

²⁴Encyclopaedia of the Nations, United Nations, International Peace and Security (available at: <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/United-Nations/International-Peace-and-Security.html>)

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶UN Peace Keeping, Theory and Practice (available at: <http://www.defencejournal.com/apr99/un-peace-keeping.htm>)

²⁷ Ibid

were starving under the open sky with no hope of life”.²⁸The UN has contributed to the process of global peace and security. As the main aims and objectives of the UN are to prevent war, develop friendly relations among nations, promote international peace and security, human rights and standard of living the UN has contributed largely to this difficult process on reaching global peace and security in the world. Therefore, “no matter how much the UN is criticized for its so far performance, no sane person can fully deny the great services of this Organization for the betterment of humankind”.²⁹

ShelfordBidel et al, also agree that “in numerous other natural disasters UN remained as the only hope”,³⁰and “in its more than fifty years old history, UN has at least communicated well the message of peace and tranquility to every corner of the world”.³¹ UN has been positioned in such complex position since its establishment of accomplishing the most difficult tasks that ever the human kind encountered, guaranteeing long lasting global peace and security for mankind.

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