UN Peacekeeping in the New Millennium

Introduction

In early September 2000 the largest group of world leaders ever to assemble in one place met at the United Nations' Millennium Summit in New York. This gathering of 189 heads of state included most of the leading figures in world affairs, including U.S. President Bill Clinton, Cuba's Fidel Castro, and Canada's Jean Chrétien. During the summit, princes, presidents, prime ministers, and dictators all took their turns on the podium of the UN General Assembly, each allotted time for a five-minute speech. Hosted by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the summit highlighted the UN's renewed peacekeeping role in the new millennium and rededicated the organization to the lofty goals its founders set at their first conference in San Francisco in 1945 at the end of the Second World War. But 55 years after its creation, the record of the United Nations in limiting international conflicts and promoting global peace and understanding among its member states appears, at best, inconsistent. Despite the fact that the UN now finds itself committed to more peacekeeping missions than at any previous time in its history, the inability of the organization to deliver lasting peace in the conflict zones where its blue-helmeted troops are present was painfully obvious during the talks. On the very eve of the summit, armed paramilitary gangs brutally murdered three UN aid workers helping refugees in West Timor. This atrocity, which took place just across the border from East Timor, the site of a recent UN peacekeeping mission, brought home to the delegates the disturbing fact that the organization was not even able to protect its own officials in violent parts of the world. Only a few weeks before, rebel forces in the war-torn African nation of Sierra Leone had kidnapped hundreds of soldiers serving with the UN peacekeeping mission there. British paratroopers finally freed the hostages. If the UN was not able to guarantee the safety of its own peacekeepers, some critics asked, then how could it have any credibility in its claims to success in stopping wars and restoring peace to the world's bloody trouble spots? The Millennium Summit, an impressive gathering of the world's power brokers, saw a great deal of self-congratulatory rhetoric and political posturing by the various heads of state, who were anxious to demonstrate their commitment to international peace while enhancing their global profiles. But the event also coincided with the release of a major internal UN document that critically reviewed the organization's history of peacekeeping and proposed a sweeping set of reforms. Titled "The Brahimi Report" after Lakhdar Brahimi, the Algerian diplomat who chaired the high-level international panel, this document called upon the UN member states, especially the wealthy developed countries of the West, to commit themselves fully-financially, morally, and politically-to global peacekeeping and peacemaking. It warned that if the organization did not embrace these objectives, and back them up with the necessary financial, technological, and military resources, then the world would be facing a very grim and conflict-ridden future in the 21st century.
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Long-term Thinking

After speeches and photo opportunities the Millennium Summit concluded, and the planet's most powerful people went home. The world had not changed much as a result of their meeting and only a few weeks later a new and potentially dangerous round of fighting between Israel and the Palestinians began in the Middle East, with the UN powerless to intervene. However, not unlike conferences, workshops, and study sessions that all professional people engage in, the Millennium Summit could prove to be the catalyst for change, as opposed to the solution itself. This is especially true when one considers the importance of long-term versus short-term thinking.

Implications

As you watch this News in Review report for the first time, consider what the long-term results could be of the Millennium Summit. For each of the elements listed below, explain its implications in terms of the history of the UN itself or in terms of this historic summit.

- The diversity of nations represented
- The UN's original mandate
- Collective measures
- Lofty principles
- The Middle East
- The Korean Crisis of 1950
- Canada, its role, and its reputation
- North and South Korea
- Rwanda
- UN humiliation
- UN successes
- Kofi Annan's "common effort"
- "More robust peacekeeping"
- Human rights, sovereignty, and territorial integrity
- International law and regional and global stability
- Non-military issues
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Missions Past and Present

Historical perspective is not only a point of view, it is also a tool or skill that we can use to enhance critical reasoning and to learn the lessons of history. As you read this background material on the United Nations peacekeeping activities, consider what its 50-year history has taught us.

Half a Century of UN Peacekeeping

In 1998, the United Nations marked the 50th anniversary of its first peacekeeping mission. UN troops had been dispatched to the disputed border region of Kashmir in the wake of a serious conflict between India and Pakistan after both countries achieved their independence in 1948. Since that time, there have been 49 UN peacekeeping missions, most of which were initiated during the period from 1988 to the present. As of 2000, the UN has approximately 40 000 blue-helmeted peacekeeping troops stationed in 14 countries, at a total cost of about $3.3-billion per year to the organization. Nonetheless, the UN-sponsored Brahimi Report on its peace operations, published in August 2000, concluded that the organization’s missions were badly underfunded and staffed by poorly trained and equipped soldiers, most of them from developing countries. At the UN’s Millennium Summit of world leaders, held in September 2000, the Security Council voted to strengthen its peacekeeping operations, endorsing in principle the report's proposals for better training and equipment for its troops, more money for their missions, and an overhaul of the permanent body at UN headquarters in New York that oversees global peacekeeping. In the words of the UN's deputy secretary-general, Canada's Louise Fréchette, the organization needs "well-defined missions with decent troops, enough money, and political support" from powerful member states like the five permanent Security Council members: China, Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. Fréchette and others believe that without this kind of backing, the UN's ability to respond to the growing number of serious global conflicts will be seriously impaired. This in turn will mean more suffering and loss of lives in these areas and an increased potential for international instability and wider wars as local struggles spill over into neighbouring countries and regions.

Assessment One: Why is it important to understand the difference between principles, ideals, and practicalities in terms of UN peacekeeping activities?

UN Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era

The world has changed profoundly since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist regimes of Eastern Europe. The end of the Cold War, which ran from 1945 to 1991, and the great international tension between the world's two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, was a turning point in world events. During the decade 1990-2000, one of uncertainty and global instability, there have actually been more regional conflicts in different parts of the world than occurred during the Cold War. As a result, governments have looked to the UN to deal with a number of violent ethnic and nationalist conflicts, many of which have been created by the confusion and power struggles resulting from the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War. During the first 40 years of its existence, the UN fielded 13 peacekeeping missions. Many Cold War-related struggles, like
the war in Vietnam, were strictly off-limits to the UN because the rival superpowers
either did not welcome its presence or could not agree on the ground rules for UN
involvement. But since the end of the Cold War, the UN has initiated 37 new
peacekeeping missions, on practically every continent of the world.

Reaching a peak in 1993, the organization had 80,000 military and civilian
personnel from 77 countries in the field. During this time the notion of
"peacekeeping" itself underwent a radical transformation. The UN's early missions
undertook strictly defined, non-offensive military tasks such as: separating
conflicting forces, monitoring ceasefires, and preserving buffer zones between the
contending parties. This was the case in places like Cyprus and the Middle East in
the 1960s, where UN peacekeeping forces did indeed play an effective role in
limiting the fighting between rival factions. But over the course of the last decade,
peacekeeping has also come to mean assuming more long-term political, military,
and humanitarian goals, including the rebuilding of whole countries devastated by
war. In countries as far apart as Bosnia, Haiti, and East Timor, the UN has had to
take on the difficult tasks of economic reconstruction, social reintegration, and
political stabilization, which were required after devastating wars practically
destroyed the infrastructures and governmental institutions of these war-torn
states.

Besides military forces, a typical UN peacekeeping mission today might include
civilian police officers, election observers, human-rights monitors, and other civilian
personnel whose expertise may be required on the ground. The UN Security
Council initiates all peacekeeping operations. This body is the 15-member nerve
center of the UN where all major decisions regarding the maintenance of
international peace and security are made. In order to succeed, a peacekeeping
mission needs a clear and achievable set of objectives, effective commanders, and
strong financial support from member nations. Most importantly, its success
depends on the co-operation of the parties in conflict in a particular war zone. UN
peacekeeping troops are expected to be neutral, and their blue helmets symbolize
the organization they represent, intended to visually identify them and grant them
legitimacy in the eyes of local combatants and the civilian population alike.

However, it is impossible for the UN to establish peace in conditions where the
conflicting parties are unwilling to lay down their arms and where there is no peace
to keep. In such situations, like the one that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 just
before the genocide that killed between 500,000 and a million people, the small UN
observer force under the command of Canadian general Roméo Dallaire could
only stand by helplessly when the killing began. Similarly, UN missions to Somalia
and Sierra Leone were unable to create even the minimum conditions required to
end the serious civil conflict and unrest, so that these countries could be rebuilt
and their people given the chance to live free of violence and severe hardship.

Assessment Two: Any successful organization must be adaptable and capable of
keeping up with a changing world and changing circumstances. How have
historical events and social factors had an impact on the way the UN carries out its
peacekeeping role? How might these global changes redefine the UN's role in the
area of peacekeeping in the future?

The Operation of Peacekeeping Missions Under the terms of the United Nations
Charter, the organization's founding document, the Security Council has the
primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. This body,
the administrative heart of the UN, is composed of five permanent members and
10 temporary ones, the latter chosen on a two-year rotation from among the almost
200 UN member states. Any one of the five permanent Security Council members
can veto or block any peacekeeping mission if it disapproves of it. Once the
Security Council authorizes a particular action, the military and civilian personnel
who compose it are dispatched to the conflict zone. There, they remain members
of their own national authorities, but are under the operational control of the UN.
They wear the national uniforms of their respective countries, but also the blue
helmets or berets that identify them as UN peacekeepers. The UN's peacekeeping
budget in 2000 is approximately $3.3-billion. Member states contribute to the costs
of peacekeeping missions under a formula that requires wealthy developed nations to donate more than poor ones. However, one of the weaknesses the UN has had to deal with in recent years has been the failure of the United States to meet its financial obligations to the organization. This has severely limited the UN's ability to fund its growing number of peacekeeping missions effectively.

Assessment Three: In what way is the UN a microcosm of global power and hierarchy? What might some of the strengths and weaknesses of its organizational structure be?

The Importance of UN Peacekeeping Today
In the post-Cold War era, regional conflicts and civil wars have been more common than they were in the past. These struggles arise from a variety of causes, including the collapse of the political structures within a country, inter-ethnic hatreds and distrust, competition for scarce natural resources, or severe poverty. The easy availability of destructive and powerful weapons on the global arms market makes such conflicts more violent and deadly than ever before. In some war-ravaged countries, official armies are supplemented or even replaced by heavily armed paramilitary forces, often composed of fighters who lack discipline and training, and sometimes including child soldiers. In such conditions, warfare descends to a level of chaos and barbarity that is barely imaginable to anyone fortunate enough to live in a peaceful country like Canada.

However, on many occasions the five permanent Security Council members, especially the United States, the world's only remaining superpower, have been reluctant to support significant UN peacekeeping operations in various conflict zones in the world. This is primarily because the places in which they erupt are of little or no strategic importance to these major powers. In cases like the Persian Gulf War of 1991, or the Kosovo conflict of 1999, the United States, Britain, Germany, and other important countries did not hesitate to become militarily involved because these situations did pose a serious threat to vital Western economic or geopolitical security. But when vicious civil wars break out in small countries like Sierra Leone or Rwanda, there is far less international will to take significant action to end the fighting and come to the aid of the suffering civilian population.

At the same time, it is becoming more evident that in today's increasingly globalized international community, there is no longer any such thing as a local or regional conflict. Events in the Balkan region of southeastern Europe or in central Africa over the course of the past decade have shown how quickly civil wars between contending parties in one area of a fragmenting country can spill over the borders of neighbouring states and act as a serious destabilizing force. Conflicts that begin in one place can also generate many negative indirect consequences, even for countries that are not immediately affected by them. These include the illegal arms trade, international terrorism, the spread of drugs, the influx of refugees, and damage to the environment. For all its serious weaknesses, the UN remains the sole international body capable of responding to these global emergencies. Were the UN to disappear or lose the financial and political support of major countries, its ability to act in a peacekeeping role would be severely limited if not totally lost. The consequences of such an outcome for the prospects of peace and stability in the world would be very dark indeed.

Assessment Four: Suggest what the importance of each of the following is in terms of the UN's peacekeeping role in the 21st century: cause and effect, economics, moral imperative, priorities, interdependence, principled leadership.

Additional Assessment Activities
1. In many ways an organization is the sum of its parts. An organization also does not exist in isolation; it is subject to the influences of time and social change. In your own words, explain the following terms and how each exemplifies one of these two ideas: Brahimi Report, the Millennium Summit, the Cold War, peacekeeping, the Security Council, blue helmets, regional conflicts.

2. Why has the UN's international peacekeeping role become more important in
the decade following the end of the Cold War? Suggest specific factors and events that have had an impact on the UN's role.

3. How has the UN's international peacekeeping role changed during this period? Why is it important to re-assess and adjust if necessary the original concept on which any organization is founded?

4. Why is UN peacekeeping more necessary than ever before in the organization's history if global peace and security are to be preserved and enhanced in the 21st century? Why is the beginning of a new century an appropriate time to renew the UN's mandate and purpose?

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The Operation of Peacekeeping Missions Under the terms of the United Nations Charter, the organization’s founding document, the Security Council has the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. This body, the administrative heart of the UN, is composed of five permanent members and 10 temporary ones, the latter chosen on a two-year rotation from among the almost 200 UN member states. Any one of the five permanent Security Council members can veto or block any peacekeeping mission if it disapproves of it. Once the Security Council authorizes a particular action, the military and civilian personnel who compose it are dispatched to the conflict zone. There, they remain members of their own national authorities, but are under the operational control of the UN. They wear the national uniforms of their respective countries, but also the blue helmets or berets that identify them as UN peacekeepers. The UN’s peacekeeping budget in 2000 is approximately $3.3-billion. Member states contribute to the costs of peacekeeping missions under a formula that requires wealthy developed nations to donate more than poor ones. However, one of the weaknesses the UN has had to deal with in recent years has been the failure of the United States to meet its financial obligations to the organization. This has severely limited the UN’s ability to fund its growing number of peacekeeping missions effectively.

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The Brahimi Report

Examine the following press release published by the United Nations and then proceed to the questions that follow.

PRESS RELEASE

Secretary-General Kofi Annan promises major reform of UN peacekeeping; calls on Member States to provide funds, improve decision-making

Fully endorses far-reaching report by independent panel

UNITED NATIONS, 23 August 2000 - Secretary-General Kofi Annan today urged world governments to join him in implementing far-reaching changes in the structures and management of United Nations peace operations recommended by a panel of international experts, saying that prompt action was "absolutely essential to make the United Nations truly credible as a force for peace." The Panel's report recommends, among other reforms: extensive restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; a new information and strategic analysis unit to service all United Nations departments concerned with peace and security; an integrated task force at Headquarters to plan and support each peacekeeping mission from its inception; and more systematic use of information technology. Many of the proposed changes require political, financial or operational decisions from the United Nations Member States. For instance, the Panel urges the Security Council not to finalize resolutions authorizing large peacekeeping missions until Member States have pledged the necessary troops and resources; and recommends an increase in funding to strengthen the peacekeeping support staff at United Nations Headquarters. In letters forwarding the Panel's report to the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Secretary-General today said he had asked his Deputy, Louise Fréchette, to follow up on implementing its recommendations, and to submit an action plan in time for the Assembly to consider it during this autumn's session. He also hoped the report would receive attention from world leaders, who will be in New York next month for the Millennium Summit. The Secretary-General set up the Panel in March, after publishing two reports last year which highlighted the United Nations' failure to prevent genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and to protect the inhabitants of Srebrenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 1995. Saying "we must all do our utmost not to allow such horrors ever to happen again," he asked the Panel to make "a clear set of recommendations on how to do better in future in the whole range of United Nations activities in the area of peace and security." Chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Algerian Foreign Minister, the Panel included members from all six continents, with wide experience in humanitarian, development and police work as well as military peacekeeping. Among other key changes recommended in the report are the following:

Doctrine and strategy: The Panel calls for more effective conflict prevention strategies, pointing out that prevention is "far preferable for those who would otherwise suffer the consequences of war, and a less costly option for the international community than military action, emergency humanitarian relief, or reconstruction after a war has run its course." It says peacekeepers must be able to defend themselves and their mandate, with "robust rules of engagement," against those who renge on commitments or seek to undermine peace
accords by violence. And it urges the Secretariat to draw up a plan for developing better peace-building strategies. Peacekeepers and peace-builders, it says, are “inseparable partners,” since only a self-sustaining peace "offers a ready exit to peacekeeping forces."

**Mandates:** The Secretariat "must tell the Security Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear, when formulating or changing mission mandates."

**Transitional civil administration:** A panel of international legal experts should explore the idea of an interim criminal code, for use in places where the United Nations is given temporary executive powers (as currently in Kosovo and East Timor), pending the re-establishment of local rule of law and law enforcement capacity.

**Timelines:** "Traditional" United Nations peacekeeping operations (sent to monitor ceasefires and separations of forces after inter-State wars) should be fully deployed with 30 days; more complex peace operations, sent to help end intra-State conflicts, within 90 days.

**Personnel:** Member States should work together to form "coherent, multinational, brigade-sized forces," ready for effective deployment within these timelines; and should each establish a national pool of civilian police officers. The Panel does not call for a standing United Nations army, but says the Secretariat should establish "on-call" lists of about 100 military and 100 police officers and experts, from national armies and police forces, who would be available on seven days' notice to establish new mission headquarters. Conditions of service for civilian specialists should also be revised so that the United Nations can attract more qualified personnel, and reward good performance with better career prospects.

**Speed and efficiency:** The Secretary-General should be allowed funds to start planning a mission before the Security Council approves it, so that when approved it can be deployed quickly. Field missions should be given greater freedom to manage their own budgets. Additional ready-made mission "start-up kits" should be maintained at the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy.

**Funding for peacekeeping support:** The Panel remarks that, after 52 years, it is time to treat peacekeeping as a "core activity" of the United Nations rather than a "temporary responsibility." Headquarters' support for it should therefore be funded mainly through the regular United Nations budget, instead of the current "Support Account" which has to be justified year by year and post by post.

The report begins by saying that "over the last decade, the United Nations has repeatedly failed to meet the challenge" of protecting people from war, "and it can do no better today." It concludes on a more hopeful note, expressing the Panel's "shared vision" of a more effective United Nations in the future "extending a strong helping hand to a community, country or region to avert conflict or to end violence . . . a United Nations that has not only the will, but also the ability, to fulfil its great promise, justifying the confidence and trust placed in it by the overwhelming majority of humankind."

**Discussion and Analysis**
1. Why would the United Nations put out this press release?
2. How is the press release structured for maximum media impact?
3. Identify key words and phrases from the initial section of the press release that in your opinion are intended to convince the reader of the position of the UN on peacekeeping.
4. Examine each "key change" cited in the press release and suggest how the wording clarifies and supports the recommended change.
5. Suggest in your own words how the writer of this press release concludes the document. What, in your opinion, is the intended impact on the reader of the concluding statement?
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Three Canadian Views

In the wake of the publication of the Brahimi Report on the future of the UN's peace operations and the September 2000 Millennium Summit of world leaders at UN headquarters in New York, many interested observers in different countries have expressed their views about the current problems facing the organization's peacekeeping capacity, and how it might be improved. For Canada, the debate is of particular concern because the very idea of a permanent United Nations peacekeeping force was originally Canadian. In 1956, at the height of the Suez Crisis in the Middle East, Lester B. Pearson, then our country's ambassador to the UN, called for the creation of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), to be composed of troops from various UN member states, and to be dispatched to the war zone in order to end the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Since then, Canada has contributed to almost every single UN peacekeeping mission around the world, providing military and civilian personnel, financial contributions, and political endorsements in UN debates. Given that global peacekeeping is even more essential than in the past and bearing in mind that the UN's ability to provide it is under serious question, three informed Canadians have offered their analyses of the current problems the UN faces. The information below summarizes their positions.

Major-General Lewis Mackenzie

Lewis Mackenzie served in the Canadian Armed Forces for 40 years. He was the first commander of the UN peacekeeping forces dispatched to Sarajevo, Bosnia, after violent clashes erupted in that area between local Serb, Muslim, and Croat forces. He regarded the recent UN Millennium Summit with a mixture of hope and skepticism. While he was pleased that the world leaders gathered in New York endorsed the main points of the Brahimi Report, he feared that their rhetorical support for it would not lead to serious implementation of its major recommendations. And while he views the report itself as a document containing many worthwhile proposals, he has serious misgivings about some of them. For instance, the report urges the UN to identify the aggressor and the victim in a local conflict early on, and immediately side with the latter against the former. From Mackenzie's experience in Bosnia, he feels that this is too simplistic because it is frequently difficult for outside observers unfamiliar with the background to the conflict to make that kind of quick judgment. While serving in Sarajevo, Mackenzie often found to his frustration that his own conclusions about who was to blame for a particular outbreak of fighting would be thwarted by the political alignments of the various permanent members of the Security Council. For instance, if Mackenzie blamed the Bosnian Serbs, their Russian allies would protest, while if he found the Muslims or Croats at fault, the United States would be very unhappy. After the publication of the Brahimi Report, some Canadian observers suggested that Canada limit its involvement in future peacekeeping missions to training and expertise. Mackenzie takes issue with this idea, arguing that developed countries like Canada must shoulder some of the burden of troop support for UN operations, and not expect poorer developing countries to take on the task themselves. For this to happen, though, he believes that it is essential for the federal government to
restore a healthy level of funding to the Canadian Forces, whose operational capacities to participate effectively in UN peacekeeping missions have been severely reduced by a decade of huge cuts to the national defence budget.

David Bercuson
Professor David Bercuson teaches history at the University of Calgary and is the author of a recent book on Canada's participation in the Korean War, the first UN-authorized military action of the post-Second World War era. He believes that the original concept of UN peacekeeping, first proposed by Canadian diplomat and politician Lester B. Pearson, was well suited to the Cold War era but is no longer effective. This idea involved the insertion of UN troops between the parties in conflict, with the objective of keeping them apart so that peace talks could begin. This strategy worked well in places like the Middle East or Cyprus but was found to be no longer effective when violent post-Cold War conflicts like those in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, or Sierra Leone broke out. For the UN to be effective in such situations, Bercuson believes that it must organize and dispatch peacekeeping forces that are well-trained and well-equipped, and that are authorized to operate under "robust rules of engagement." This means that they would have the power to respond quickly and decisively to put down any local military resistance to their operations. In this sense, they would function as real armies, not merely referees occupying a middle ground between the parties in conflict. Bercuson also thinks that the Brahimi Report is right to propose that peacekeeping will have to involve more than just the sending of a strong military force under the UN banner to a global hot spot. It will also involve the presence of a large contingent of civilian police and experts in conflict resolution and the maintenance of the rule of law. "Guns will have to be supplemented by butter," with the UN providing local employment projects, reconstruction of damaged local infrastructures like electricity, water supply, and roads, the training of police, and the reorganization of civilian government. The recent UN mission to East Timor, a region devastated by years of brutal Indonesian occupation culminating in a violent civil war, is a good example of how such a new-model peacekeeping and peacemaking mission might look. Bercuson sees two major obstacles standing in the way of the full implementation of the Brahimi Report's sweeping recommendations. The first is financial. Will Canada and the other developed Western nations that have traditionally been the UN's strongest backers be willing to make even greater commitments of money, resources, and personnel to global peacekeeping? Secondly, he wonders whether there is sufficient will among the powerful member states, especially the United States, to back such measures and if the UN's own top-heavy and inefficient bureaucracy is up to the task. He calls on the Canadian government to endorse the report, and worries that the only alternative to an effective UN would be an increased role for the United States and NATO to use its unchallenged military and strategic power to enforce its own particular version of international peacekeeping on the world's trouble spots, as it did with such mixed results in Kosovo in 1999.

Douglas Bland
Douglas Bland is the chairman of the Defence Management Studies Program at the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He thinks that David Bercuson accepts a fundamental logical error in endorsing the main proposals of the Brahimi Report on UN peacekeeping. This is because for all its impressive recommendations, the report fails to address the fact that the main problem with UN peacekeeping operations is not in their procedures, but in the UN Charter itself. In Bland's view, this founding document of the organization prevents the UN from intervening decisively and effectively in serious international or regional conflicts. This is because the five major powers who occupy permanent seats on the Security Council control every major decision the UN makes, and have the power to veto those they oppose. They invariably act in their own national interests, especially when security issues are at stake. The Brahimi Report suggested that the UN Charter could be changed to force the members of the Security Council to regard international conflicts as global, not national interests, so that the UN could really become the main agent for peacekeeping in the world. Unfortunately, Bland believes, this is highly unlikely because the major powers would never agree to such a change in the UN Charter since it would restrict their
ability to act globally in defence of their national security interests. In his view, the problem the authors of the Brahimi Report faced can be compared to the old saying that "If pigs had wings, then they could fly." In Bland's view, the report's recommendations amount to a worthy but ultimately futile attempt to sew wings on the body of the UN pig. It is an example of what he refers to as the "administrator's delusion," the idea that any major organizational problem can be fixed by changing its rules and/or procedures, not by altering the fundamental structures of the organization itself. Given the fact that the UN Charter itself prevents the organization from acting in any significant way as a global peacemaker, Bland asks himself what the international community should do instead. He concludes that in the absence of any effective UN peacekeeping presence, it is likely that peace will be made in the old-fashioned way, by great powers like the United States and the military alliances they lead, like NATO. They will act in regions where their vital economic or security interests are at stake, like the Middle East or Kosovo, but not in parts of the world that have no real economic or strategic importance to them, like most of Africa. In his view, the world is entering a new era of what he calls "neo-realepolitik." This means that the only significant peacekeeping efforts involving the use of major military force will be those that the powerful nations of the world undertake on behalf of their own interests. This may be unfortunate, but in Bland's view it is the dominant reality with which the international community must come to terms, whether it likes it or not.

**Interpretive Activities**

1. In your own words, summarize the main points each author makes about the current difficulties facing the UN in its peacekeeping operations and if or how these might be overcome.
2. Form small groups and summarize how the arguments each author makes differ from those of the other two experts. Which of these views you think best addresses the problems facing UN peacekeeping missions in the world today? Which of the views might you take issue with? Give reasons for your assessment.

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"The UN Children’s Summit," November 1990
"Bosnia: A Peacekeeper’s Nightmare," September 1992
"The UN Women's Summit: Two Weeks in China," October 1995

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Korea: The Forgotten War
UN Peacekeeping in the New Millennium

Discussion, Research and Essay Questions

1. Using an encyclopedia, atlas, or other resource materials, prepare a chart or storyboard presenting the following information about the United Nations: location, organizational structure, member nations, main parts, objectives and purpose, leading figures, and areas of the world in which it is active.

2. Find out about the activities of the Canadian United Nations Association by contacting a local branch of this organization in your community. The headquarters of this association is located at 900-130 Slater St., Ottawa ON K1P 6E2. You will also find essential information at their Web site: www.unac.org.

3. Research the activities of UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), the United Nations body that is especially involved in helping to alleviate the problem of poverty in the world, especially among children and young people. How do the donations that some Canadian children collect on Halloween assist the world's poor children? Why is it important to remember the other functions and activities of the United Nations?

4. Prepare a report on the background of one of the current UN international peacekeeping missions in the following global conflict zones: Congo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Haiti, Bosnia, Middle East. Your report should include information on: (a) the background to the conflict, (b) main warring parties, (c) reasons for UN involvement, (d) effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping mission, (e) Canadian participation, and (f) current state of the mission and future prospects for success.

5. A number of prominent Canadians have been involved in various aspects of UN peacekeeping over the past decades. Prepare a report on the life and achievements of one of these Canadians, and how she or he has contributed to the goals of international peace and the United Nations in general: John Humphrey, Lester B. Pearson, Stephen Lewis, Louise Arbour, Major-General Lewis Mackenzie, General Roméo Dallaire, Louise Fréchette.

6. Consult the UN Web site "United Nations peacekeeping: In the service of peace" at www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home_bottom.htm. Prepare a report on the information in this site in which you suggest how, through this particular medium, the UN is attempting to validate, promote, and support its mandate of peacekeeping. Pay close attention to the statement by Secretary-General Kofi Annan.
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