UN Peace-Keeping: In the Interest of Community or Self?

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This article examines whether state participation in UN peace-keeping results from a state's idealistic commitment to the global community and international peace or whether participation is tied to the state's national interest. With the high profile of UN peace-keeping in this post-Cold War era, the answer to this inquiry may suggest to us whether the emerging international system will be organized on the principles of community or self. This inquiry is conducted through an examination of the eighteen UN peace-keeping operations fielded from 1948 until 1990. Specifically, this article examines the incidence of state participation and the types of contributions states have made both to observer missions and peace-keeping forces at the aggregate level. This article also explores the perception of peace-keeping successes and failures and the perceptions of the dominant peace-keepers to determine whether an idealist or a realist perspective better accounts for state participation in peace-keeping. The findings provide support for the realist account. Further, the findings suggest that those states whose interests were better served by the continuation of the international status quo – that is, the states of the advanced industrialized West and non-Western states who have enjoyed some prestige in the international status quo – have dominated UN peace-keeping.

1. Two Conflicting Notions

There are two conflicting ideas about UN peace-keeping operations. The first is that the UN is coming into its own as an international actor. Recently, United Nations peace-keeping has enjoyed some success after a long period of mixed results. This has coincided with the end of the Cold War and bipolar global politics, creating an impression of sudden universal support for international conflict management. States can now set politics aside and work cooperatively to maintain international norms and standards as embodied and protected by the UN system. This has led to more frequent calls from around the world for the UN to field broader-reaching and more proactive peace-keeping operations. The UN has fielded more operations in the past several years than it has in any comparable period since it began peace-keeping operations in 1948 (Goulding, 1993).

The conflicting notion is that UN

members are increasingly nervous about the recent tendency for the UN to assume an international persona separate from its members.[1] This nervousness can serve as a useful check on an unbridled UN activism. But, resistance to increasing UN activism may undercut the UN at a time when it is finally living up to the expectations built into its charter. States will participate in UN peace-keeping only in limited ways and with constant approval-seeking from their national capitals. Expanded scope or not, the UN cannot function without the voluntary compliance and full and committed participation of its members.

The resolution of this dilemma may well set the foundation for the type of world system to come. If the UN continues to expand its activities the idea of national sovereignty will be narrowed, while the idea of international community and its attendant member obligations will be enhanced. If the UN is 'reined in' instead (Lefever, 1993), international community will once again be sacrificed to national interests, especially those of dominant state actors, and the new world order will operate on much the same principles as the old.

These broader implications for the com-

munity of states are not the specific focus of this article. Instead, I address the more immediate question of why states choose to participate in UN peace-keeping. Specifically, I ask whether participation in peace-keeping results from a state's idealistic commitment to the global community and international peace or from the member's national interest.

The answers suggested here derive primarily from an aggregate-level examination of the eighteen UN peace-keeping operations fielded from 1948 until 1990. I also consider the perceptions of UN peace-keeping. By way of a preliminary conclusion, I contend that a realist interpretation better explains states' participation. Further, those states whose interests are better served by the continuation of the international status quo dominate UN peace-keeping, perhaps as a means to maintain the status quo.

2. The Politics of Peace-keeping

Fundamental to the idea of UN peace-keeping is the assertion of neutrality. UN peace-keeping was begun as a way to circumvent the political deadlock between the USA and the USSR in the Security Council while allowing the UN to fulfill its charter obligations regarding the maintenance of international peace (Higgins, 1993; United Nations, 1990). The UN would take no sides but establish a neutral military presence to facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflict. Similarly, states participating in UN peace-keeping would not pursue individual interests concerning any of the combatants.

Another facet of neutrality is that whereas countries are duty bound by UN collective security resolutions, the evolving practice of peace-keeping has been premised on the idea that countries are not *required* to participate but do so by their own volition (Higgins, 1993). Involvement or non-involvement theoretically does not signify anything about a country's political intentions but is, instead, the apolitical decision by the participant to support the global community and its ideals.

Peace-keeping operations undertaken outside the mantle of the UN should not be held to this same standard of neutrality, although sometimes non-UN peace-keeping is by proclamation neutral. In these instances, the political purposes and motivations of the peace-keepers are fairly obvious. For example, the Russian army has recently assumed the role of 'peace-keeper' within some of the more unstable republics of the former USSR. The Russian government has claimed that it has a responsibility as the most stable country in the region to try to contain the violent conflict within the former empire. International observers within and outside the region have been more cynical. As was reported in *The Christian Science Monitor* of 14 September 1992:

> [T]he idea of Russia as peacekeeper is hard for many to swallow, coming so soon after the collapse of the Soviet empire. Many are suspicious of Russia as a 'neutral' force, fearful that its peacekeeping is an attempt to reassume an old Russian role – that of an imperial arbiter of the fate of the many nationalities that lie along and even within its vast borders (Sneider, 1992, pp. 1, 4).

It can be argued that the term 'peace-keeping' has been co-opted by the Russian government to mask continued Russian interest in empire. Peace-keepers from outside the former USSR who have no vested interest in the outcomes of the political and military struggles within the new republics would be able to wear the 'neutral' mantle more credibly than the Russian army can.

Peace-keeping can be used to mask political intentions. Since the conclusion of the Gulf War of 1991, a multilateral force has watched over Northern Iraq and over the skies of Southern Iraq. This force has the blessing of the United Nations Security Council, but the troops deployed do not wear the blue helmet of the UN. That is, this force is not a formal United Nations peace-keeping operation, although the international media and the governments who contribute to the force have claimed that it is. Other international observers view this activity as great power meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, 'peace-keeping' repackaged as interventionism. Indeed, this is now openly called humanitarian interventionism – a term which implies

the right to disregard issues of sovereignty in order to protect the rights of individuals.

Thus, the term peace-keeping can be co-opted for particularized national political purposes in apparent contradiction to important principles of peace-keeping. Peace-keeping appears to be of two radically different kinds: neutral peace-keeping supported by the global community and the misleading use of the term by individual states to mask intervention in the internal affairs of another state. The distinctions between the two are sometimes blurred and it is quite possible for an individual state or a group of states to establish a neutral, non-UN peace-keeping force and for UN peace-keeping to serve the political purposes of individual states.

3. *The Political Origins of UN Peace-keeping*

UN peace-keeping developed out of the thwarted global political aspirations of a single state. At the close of World War II, Canadian statespersons undertook an aggressive campaign to establish a special status for Canada and other 'middle power' states in the new United Nations. The Canadians wanted this special status in recognition of Canada's military and financial contributions to the allied victory in the war and to solidify the rank of the middle powers directly below the 'Big Five' and above everyone else (Holbraad, 1984; Holmes, 1982; MacKay, 1969). Other self-identified middle powers – Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Poland, Belgium, and Sweden – endorsed this campaign (Wood, 1988, p. 9).

The Canadian argument for special middle power status, although functionalist in nature, quickly acquired a 'moral imperative' (Holbraad, 1984 p. 58; Wood, 1988). The Canadians argued that middle powers should be given special status in the UN because they 'could be entrusted to use their power responsibly in the interest of the world community' (MacKay, 1969, p. 137). The argument continued that middle powers could not challenge the international peace and order – as could the great powers – but

they possessed sufficient resources *together* to protect the order against aggressive states. Middle powers could do this through so-called 'middle power diplomacy', an approach to diplomacy aimed at mitigating interstate tensions and conflicts in order to prevent the possibility of war between the great powers (Hayes, 1994; Higgott & Cooper, 1990; Holmes, 1982). Although this argument failed to win the middle powers a special status in the UN, it *became* an important element of the philosophy driving the deliberations of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold and Canadian Lester Pearson over the Suez Crisis of 1956.[2] Out of these deliberations came the first formal UN peace-keeping operation. Soon after, UN peace-keeping became the 'prerogative' of middle powers (MacKay, 1969).

4. *Alternative Explanations*

The origin of UN peace-keeping, then, has an internal contradiction that characterizes it to date. Participation in UN peace-keeping is supposedly an act that transcends narrow national interests, while in no small way peace-keeping has developed as a way for middle powers to demonstrate their power in and importance to world politics. Two competing explanations for state participation in UN peace-keeping can be developed from this contradiction.

First, state participation that transcends narrow national interests can be explained from an idealist perspective. Briefly, states will participate in UN peace-keeping out of an obligation to protect the international peace and to preserve international norms and values. States will do so even in the face of conflicting national interests (Doxey, 1989; Granatstein, 1992; Hawes, 1984). The so-called middle powers[3] are the most likely states to protect the international system, and thus more likely to participate in multilateral activities such as peace-keeping because of their strong commitment to international peace. Indeed, early in the life of the UN, the middle powers proclaimed themselves the only states that could be trusted to protect the UN from the great

powers whose own commitment to inter-
nationalism was suspect (Clarkson, 1968;
Hawes, 1984; MacKay, 1969; Puchala &
Coate, 1989).

The realist explanation of state partici-
pation in UN peace-keeping is that states do
whatever they can, given their power
resources, to protect and preserve their
national interests. If national leaders see
their states' interests inexorably linked to
the continuation of the international status
quo, they will support and defend the status
quo. International organizations, particu-
larly the UN, are the main beneficiaries of
such support (Holbraad, 1984; Karns &
Mingst, 1987, pp. 462–463). Promotion of
national interest through support of the in-
ternational status quo is especially relevant
to the middle powers because of the aggre-
gate power they can wield.

Middle power interests are served by a
continuation of the international status quo
because in the status quo they have achieved
relative affluence and influence: this is the
case for Western middle powers especially.
Non-Western middle powers or even 'small'
or 'weak' powers may also support the
status quo, even though the status quo is
undeniably Western in origins. For these
states, it is unrealistic to imagine completely
revising the world system to better serve
their interests. However, these states can
attempt to find for themselves a position
within the established order from which
they can offer and defend non-status quo
interests. India's and Brazil's involvement in
the UN system can be understood in this
way. Thus, participation in UN peace-keep-
ing can derive from an interest in protecting
the international system and the participant
state's current or *desired* position in that
system.

5. The Historical Record

Given these alternative explanations, what
does the record on UN peace-keeping
suggest? I contend that the pattern of state
participation, the geographical distribution
of operations, the various accounts of the
failures and successes of individual oper-
ations, and the accounts of the perceptions

and intentions of the peace-keeping states
suggest that states become involved in UN
peace-keeping mainly to serve their own
national interests.

5.1 State Participation

Much of what has been written about UN
peace-keeping has been idiosyncratic and
atheoretical (Neack, 1991). The preferred
mode seems to involve single case studies of
particular operations or peace-keepers.[4]
The only published comparative study on
peace-keeping examines six cases of peace-
keeping – four UN and two multinational –
in the Middle East (Diehl, 1988). This
dearth of aggregate-level research is curious
given the data available from the UN on
peace-keeping operations (UN, 1990).

I have examined the UN's published
record to determine whether the pattern of
state participation in peace-keeping suggests
an idealist or a realist explanation. It
includes data on eighteen operations,
including ten observer missions and eight
peace-keeping forces. All of these appear in
Table I, listed in order of starting dates. The
incidence of state participation in peace-
keeping is presented in Table II, which also
includes incidence of participation as disag-
gregated into observer missions and peace-
keeping forces.[5] The 'middle powers' are at
the head of the list. This designation is mis-
leading in terms of wealth and power; on
per capita indicators particularly, these
'middle' countries tend towards the top of
the rankings (Neack, 1993). Moreover, this
view of 'middle powers' as among the
world's powerful states is the general
consensus of scholars and statespersons.
The single non-Western state in Table II,
India, has a considerable reputation as a
regional power, as a leader among non-
aligned states, and a rising newly industrial-
izing country. Much of India's international
status comes from its activities within the
UN (see, Rajan, 1962; Rana, 1970; Thakur,
1980).

The USA is also on the top ten list, which
is hard to reconcile with the claim that UN
peace-keeping disallows the participation of
the Big Five countries. Other frequent
peace-keepers – Canada, Norway, Den-

Table I. United Nations Peace-keeping, 1948–90

Observer Missions

UNTSO – UN Truce Supervision Organization, June 1948 to date in Palestine
UNMOGIP – UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, January 1949 to date in Jammu and Kashmir, India, and the India–Pakistan border
UNOGIL – UN Observation Group in Lebanon, June to December 1958 on Lebanon–Syria border
UNYOM – UN Yemen Observation Mission, July 1963 to September 1964
DOMREP – Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic, May 1965 to October 1966
UNIPOM – UN India–Pakistan Observation Mission, September 1965 to March 1966 on the India–Pakistan border
UNGOMAP – UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan, May 1988 to March 1990
UNIIMOG – UN Iran–Iraq Military Observer Group, August 1988 to date
UNAVEM – UN Angola Verification Mission, January 1989 to date
ONUCA – UN Observer Group in Central America, December 1989 to date in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua

Peace-keeping Forces

UNEF I – UN Emergency Force, November 1956 to June 1967 in Suez Canal area to Sinai peninsula and Gaza
ONUC – UN Operations in the Congo, July 1960 to June 1964 in Congo/Zaire
UNSF – UN Security Force in West New Guinea (West Irian), October 1962 to April 1963
UNFICYP – UN Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus, March 1964 to date
UNEF II – Second UN Emergency Force, October 1973 to July 1979 in Suez Canal area and Sinai peninsula
UNDOF – UN Disengagement Observer Force, June 1974 to date in Syrian Golan Heights
UNIFIL – UN Interim Force in Lebanon, March 1978 to date in Southern Lebanon
UNTAG – UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia, April 1989 to March 1990 in Namibia and Angola

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Source: United Nations (1990, pp. 419–449).

mark, and Italy – are NATO members and therefore have similar and mutual security concerns.

Looking beyond the top ten peace-keepers, seventeen, or slightly more than half, are Western or Western-oriented states. The only members of the former Eastern bloc on the list are Poland and the USSR. Many of the others in Table II are states which at various times have attempted to establish themselves as regional and/or non-aligned or rising global powers; such as, India, Ghana, and Brazil. Thus, state participation in UN peace-keeping supports the view that the most likely participants are states that benefit from the status quo, and aspiring 'powers' that seek to achieve some relative prestige within the status quo.

This view of overall state participation in UN peace-keeping also tallies with participation in observer missions, a less costly form of participation in peace-keeping forces. The most frequent participants to observer missions are the traditional middle powers. The superpowers are also on the list, but not among the most frequent participants; and the other Western great

powers – the UK and France – not at all. Observer missions do not seem to be high priority to great powers and superpowers, but they are still dominated by the West.

5.1.1 *Contributions Made to Peace-keeping*
Fifty-seven countries contributed in some way to the ten UN observer missions in the period from 1948 to 1990. Table III presents the particular types of contributions made by the most frequent participants in observer missions and peace-keeping forces. Military observers and/or police constituted the most common type of contribution made by the top participants. All of the states in Table III contributed observers in three or more missions. Canada contributed military personnel in eight of the ten observer missions. The fact that states contribute military personnel more than anything else is not too remarkable, as these operations need to be staffed to be operational. Furthermore, states need only send a handful of military observers to be counted as participants in peace-keeping, and most states can send a few troops or military police fairly cheaply. Indeed, of the twenty-four single-

Table II. UN Peace-keepers, 1948–90

Country	Total Operations	Observer Missions	Peace-keeping Forces
Canada	17	9	8
Sweden	15	7	8
Ireland	13	7	6
Finland	12	6	6
Norway	12	7	5
Denmark	11	7	4
India	11	7	4
Italy	11	6	5
Australia	9	5	4
USA	9	2	7
Austria	8	3	5
Ghana	8	4	4
Brazil	7	4	3
Netherlands	7	4	3
New Zealand	7	5	2
Argentina	6	5	1
Indonesia	6	2	4
Nigeria	6	2	4
Switzerland	6	2	4
Yugoslavia	6	3	3
Japan	5	2	3
Nepal	5	3	2
Peru	5	2	3
Poland	5	2	3
UK	5	0	5
USSR	5	2	3
Belgium	4	3	1
Burma	4	3	1
Chile	4	4	0
Ecuador	4	4	0
Pakistan	4	1	3
Sri Lanka	4	2	2
West Germany	4	1	3

Includes only those countries participating in more than three operations out of a total of 18.
Source: United Nations (1990, pp. 419–449).

time participants in observer missions, twenty-one contributed military personnel only.

What is remarkable is that so few states contributed to the logistical end of these operations, another area critical to the success of the operations. Even Canada contributed military personnel more often than it contributed logistical support, although the argument has been made that logistical support is Canada's most critical contribution to all UN peace-keeping.

Examining contributions to peace-keeping forces, we find that the two critical aspects of staffing and logistics are covered fairly evenly. Indeed, as given in Table III, the top participants in peace-keeping forces ensured that all aspects of the operations were covered fairly well. This degree of coverage suggests a high commitment to the success of the operations.

The pattern of state participation in and contribution to UN observer missions and peace-keeping forces, then, can be summarized as follows. Observer missions have been dominated by Western AICs, especially those often labeled 'middle powers'. The contributions made to observer missions have been skewed heavily on the side of military personnel, with rather less attention given to the other functional aspects of the missions. Peace-keeping forces also tend to be dominated by Western AICs, with the USA and the UK among the top peace-keepers. Finally, states' contributions to peace-keeping forces tend to cover all functional areas of the operations well, giving equal consideration to logistics, military personnel, and command personnel.

Overall, then, it does appear that UN peace-keeping operations of both sorts have been most supported by Western states. Western participation in observer missions seems more neutral than that in peace-keeping forces, given the lower incidence of super- and great power involvement in the former compared to the latter. However, it may be that observer missions are considered less critical to preserving the international peace or order, thus drawing less attention from the most powerful members of the West. This might also explain the spotty and skewed contribution records of participants in observer missions as compared to contributions to peace-keeping forces. On the face of it, there is nothing unusual about the fact that states are willing to make higher and more diverse commitments to peace-keeping forces, given the level of danger inherent to these operations. What is peculiar is that peace-keeping forces themselves seem so heavily dominated by one group of states that are so willing to put considerable strength behind their participation.

Table III. Types of Contributions to Peace-keeping Operations

Country	Total	CMD	MIL	MED	LOG	SPL
Observer Missions						
Canada	9	3	8	–	5	–
Denmark	7	1	7	–	–	–
Ireland	7	2	5	–	–	–
Norway	7	3	7	–	–	–
Sweden	7	3	6	–	1	–
India	7	4	6	–	1	–
Finland	6	2	6	–	–	–
Italy	6	1	6	–	2	–
Argentina	5	–	4	–	1	–
Australia	5	2	5	–	1	–
New Zealand	5	–	5	–	1	–
Brazil	4	1	4	–	–	–
Chile	4	1	4	–	–	–
Ecuador	4	1	4	–	–	–
Netherlands	4	–	4	–	1	–
Ghana	4	1	3	–	–	–
Peace-keeping Forces						
Canada	8	3	2	1	8	1
Sweden	8	4	6	1	4	–
USA	7	1	–	–	7	2
Finland	6	3	6	–	1	–
Ireland	6	3	6	–	2	–
Austria	5	3	4	1	1	–
Italy	5	–	–	1	5	–
Norway	5	1	3	2	4	–
UK	5	1	1	1	5	–
Denmark	4	–	2	–·	2	–
Switzerland	4	–	–	1	3	1
India	4	4	3	1	2	–
Indonesia	4	1	4	–	–	–
Australia	4	–	1	–	2	1
Ghana	4	2	4	1	3	–
Nigeria	4	1	4	–	2	–

CMD = command personnel; MIL = non-command military personnel used as police, observers, peace-keeping troops; MED = medical personnel and supplies; LOG = logistical support, such as transportation vehicles and crews, communications facilities and personnel; SPL = non-medical, non-logistical supplies.

Includes only those countries participating in more than three operations out of a total of 18. Countries sometimes make more than one type of contribution to a single peace-keeping operation.

Source: United Nations (1990, pp. 419–449).

5.2 *Geographical Distribution of Peace-keeping*

Peace-keeping operations from 1945 to 1990 were fielded primarily in the Middle East, as shown in Table IV, with only one fielded in Oceania, two in the Caribbean/Central America, and three each in South Asia and Africa. What may account for this skewed distribution? The Middle East has, of course, been the site of more interstate and intrastate conflict than anywhere else in the world. Conflicts in the Middle East might also have been particularly deadly, given the levels of arms imports by Middle Eastern countries or particularly threatening to the international order.

An examination of the incidence of inter-state and intrastate (civil) war by region for this period does suggest some *limited* support for the explanation that the Middle East has been more conflictual than other regions. According to John Rothgeb (1993, p. 75), from 1945 to 1988 there were seven interstate wars in the region he denoted as North Africa/Middle East, four interstate wars in Southeast Asia, three in South Asia,

two in Sub-Saharan Africa, and one in each of the remaining regions – Eastern Europe, Central America, North Asia, Mediterranean, and South Atlantic. In the same period, there were fourteen intrastate/civil wars in Sub-Saharan Africa, twelve in North Africa/Middle East, eight each in Central America and Southeast Asia, seven in South America, six in South Asia, two each in North Asia and East Asia, and one in the Mediterranean region (Rothgeb, 1993, p. 76). Thus there has been a considerable amount of armed conflict in the Middle East but not enough to warrant the attention of half of UN peace-keeping through 1990.

Have conflicts in the Middle East been deadlier than conflicts elsewhere? Middle Eastern countries do possess significantly more and technologically better armaments and weapons of war than do other non-Western regions. This is apparent in the level of major weapons imports to the region. For example, SIPRI reports that the Middle East accounted for 50% of all major weapon imports by developing countries from 1982 to 1986, compared to 14% for South Asia, 11% for the Far East and Oceania, 9% for South America, 8% for North Africa, 7% for Sub-Saharan Africa, and 3% for Central America (SIPRI, 1987, p. 184, Figure 7.2). For the longer period of 1967 to 1986, SIPRI reports that Middle Eastern major weapons imports exceeded those of other regions sometimes by more than three times as much (SIPRI, 1987, p. 186, Figure 7.4).

The higher level of arms imports in the Middle East was largely due to US support for Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, as well as to the greater 'disposable' income of countries in the Middle East compared to other developing areas. However, this suggests an apparent contradiction in the international behavior of the AICs. On the one hand, the international community has shown its concern for conflict in the Middle East by deploying peace-keeping operations in high number there, and at the same time certain members of the international community have been the primary sources of militarization there. That the USSR and the USA were the world's largest exporters of arms to developing countries, and that these countries were particularly competitive in the Middle East, is consistent with a policy of self-interest.

But the main peace-keeping countries should *not* be expected to contribute to the spread of weapons in the world. However, despite the fact that UN Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding (1993) has hailed the recent period as the 'second golden age' of peace-keeping, Table V shows that many of the most frequent peace-keepers are also ranked among the largest arms exporters in this same period. The second column is the most telling. The 'middle power' states of Sweden, Italy, Brazil, and the Netherlands are among the top thirteen major weapons exporters to the developing world. The non-superpower arms suppliers, a SIPRI report has concluded, were the preferred sources of arms for combatants during the Cold War because 'the two superpowers were more prone to use arms transfers as a means to influence warring parties than were other suppliers, even taking into account their quantitative lead in the arms market' (Pearson et al., 1992, pp. 401–402). Thus, countries whose international reputation rests, in part, on their steady participation in peace-keeping at the same time have stimulated the global arms race. This raises serious questions about their commitment to the international peace. Indeed, the idealist explanation of UN peace-keeping cannot reconcile this inconsistency. These two acts are not inconsistent, however, with the realist view that arms sales and peace-keeping are all tied to the same mission: the pursuit of national interests.

UN peace-keeping may be interpreted as a palliative administered after the self-interested act of selling arms ignites regional animosities. There is, however, no particular reason to expect that states feel any particular twinges of guilt over arms sales. It is more likely that UN peace-keeping serves the same interests as arms sales do. That is, peace-keeping is self-interested action to establish, preserve, or increase a state's own position and power base in the world.

In this realist perspective, the Western

Table IV. Geographical Distribution of Peace-keeping

Region	Observer Missions	Peace-keeping Forces
North America	–	–
Central America and Caribbean	DOMREP, ONUCA	–
South America	–	–
Europe	–	–
Middle East	UNTSO, UNOGIL, UNYOM, UNIIMOG	UNEF I, UNFICYP, UNEF II, UNDOF, UNIFIL
South Asia	UNMOGIP, UNIPOM, UNGOMAP	–
Asia	–	–
Oceania	USNF	–
Africa	UNAVEM	ONUC, UNTAG

Source: United Nations (1990, pp. 419–449).

states that dominate peace-keeping operations also have a firm hand in the decision to field peace-keepers. These states use their control over the UN to keep it out of regions considered to be their own spheres of influence and thus controllable. Thus, the USA would discourage UN interest in establishing peace-keeping operations in the Caribbean and Central America as well as in East and Southeast Asia (after the departure of the West European powers) up until the late 1980s, and European peace-keepers would discourage UN activities in Africa. So, until 1989 when ONUCA was begun, there had only been one UN peace-keeping operation (an observer mission) in the Western Hemisphere – DOMREP, started in 1966. Similarly, until early 1989 when UNAVEM and UNTAG were begun, there had only been one UN peace-keeping operation in Africa – ONUC, started in 1960. Furthermore, despite the considerable international and civil warfare in Southeast Asia (an area that has gone from the European to the US sphere of influence) over the past four decades, no UN peace-keeping operation was fielded there until 1992 with UNTAC in Cambodia. All of these newer peace-keeping operations, it should be noted, occur at or after the end of the Cold War.

On the other hand, the Middle East has not been easily controlled by anyone in the post-World War II period. The USA and the USSR competed for allies in the area and the growing awareness of the power of cartelized oil and growing global oil depen-

dency all contributed to the development of local countervailing power. Thus, Western states would encourage and even require the involvement of the UN to help contain conflicts in the Middle East.

This is not to imply that the Western states did not *attempt* to exert great power control over the Middle Eastern states after World War II. The first formal UN peace-keeping operation, UNEF I, was developed after the UN Secretary-General rejected a plan that would set up the Western states of the UK and France as 'peace-keepers' in the Suez area (Granatstein, 1992, p. 228). This plan seems to have originated with Canadian (and later Nobel Peace Prize winner) Lester Pearson:

> Pearson's initial idea in the heart of the crisis was that the British and the French invaders might lay down the Union Jack and the *tricolore* for the blue flag of the United Nations. The invaders, in other words, could become the peacekeepers (Granatstein, 1992, p. 228).

Granatstein has concluded that the Canadians were surprised that the Secretary-General would reject the plan. They were also surprised when President Nasser refused to allow Canadian troops to be deployed with the UN peace-keepers in Egyptian territory. Finally, and ultimately, the Canadians were surprised and confused to find that their special relationship with the UK could cause problems in international affairs. Of course, what the British, French, and Canadians had not fully understood by 1956 was that the unrivaled leader of the Western world, the USA, would prefer and

Table V. Comparing Most Frequent Peace-keepers with Largest Major Weapons Exporters

| Country | Total Participation | | | Total Major Weapons Exports in USD mill. and Rank among all Exporters | | |
	PKO	ObM	PFo	To All States	To Developing States	To Industrialized States
Canada	17	9	8	NA	NA	387 10
Sweden	15	7	8	1524 11	758 13	766 7
Italy	11	6	5	1878 8	1390 9	448 8
USA	9	2	7	59957 2	23618 2	36339 1
Brazil	7	4	3	1629 10	1622 7	NA
Netherlands	7	4	3	1758 9	1412 8	345 14
UK	5	–	5	9097 4	7599 5	1498 6

UN peace-keeping operations from 1948 to 1990. *Source:* United Nations (1990, pp. 419–449).
Total arms exports for the years 1987–91. Only data for the top fifteen exporters to each category provided.
Source: SIPRI (1992, p. 272, Table 8.1).
PKO = all peace-keeping operations; ObM = observer missions; PFo = peace-keeping forces.

require less obvious great power gunboat diplomacy.

During the renewed Cold War that characterized the early and mid-1980s, the US and its allies demonstrated little interest in managing the international system through the UN. Correspondingly, after the initiation of UNIFIL in Southern Lebanon in March 1978, no UN peace-keeping operation was begun until UNGOMAP in Afghanistan and Pakistan in May 1988. Instead, the Western states attempted to manage conflict in the ever-important Middle East through non-UN multilateral activities such as the Multinational Force (MNF) of US, British, French, and Italian troops deployed with less than spectacular results in Beirut in the early 1980s (Diehl, 1988).

By the end of the decade and near the end of the Cold War, five new UN peace-keeping operations were begun. Unlike the earlier concentration of UN peace-keeping within the Middle East, the five new operations were widely dispersed in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iran and Iraq, in Angola, in Namibia, and Central America. These operations were unusual in that they originated in areas characterized by protracted conflict in which the UN had previously been ineffective or in areas in which the UN had been closed out. These operations were also unusual in the wide geographical range of the peace-keepers involved. UNIIMOG and

UNTAG were especially popular with the peace-keepers, having 32 and 51 countries respectively participating.

The wider dispersion of these UN peace-keeping operations and the involvement of more countries as peace-keepers does not demonstrate that a new era in UN peace-keeping has started. Two reasons support this conclusion. First, it is difficult to extrapolate from so recent a time period. Furthermore, within this same time period, the USA successfully managed the UN Security Council so as to win approval for the military action to drive Iraqi troops out of Kuwait in January and February 1991. The USA also was able to gain UN support for the continued air-policing of Northern and Southern Iraq in the year after the Iraqi troops withdrew from Kuwait.

Second, and more importantly, these new UN operations were still dominated by Western peace-keepers. Indeed, much of the increase in the number of peace-keepers in some of these recent peace-keeping operations resulted from significantly greater *Western, especially European*, involvement. This was particularly the case for UNIIMOG (Iran–Iraq) in which there were thirteen European peace-keeper countries, plus Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Similarly, in UNTAG (Namibia) the European countries accounted for twenty-two out of fifty-one states, and Western interests were represented further by the USA, Canada,

Table VI. Regional Differences in State Participation in Peace-keeping

PKO	Total Participants	NAm	CAm	SAm	Eur	MEa	SAs	Asi	Oce	Afr*
Observer Missions										
UNTSO	21	2	–	2	12	–	–	2	2	1
UNMOGIP	16	2	1	3	7	–	1	–	2	–
UNOGIL	20	1	–	4	7	–	4	3	1	–
UNYOM	11	1	–	–	6	–	2	–	1	1
DOMREP	4	1	–	2	–	–	1	–	–	–
UNIPOM	19	1	–	3	8	–	2	1	2	2
UNGOMAP	11	1	–	–	6	–	1	1	1	1
UNIIMOG	32	1	–	3	13	1	2	4	2	6
UNAVEM	10	–	–	2	4	1	1	–	–	2
ONUCA	11	1	–	5	4	–	1	–	–	–
Peace-keeping Forces										
UNEF I	12	2	–	2	7	–	–	1	–	–
ONUC	36	2	2	2	11	3	3	3	–	10
UNSF	9	2	–	1	2	–	3	–	–	1
UNFICYP	12	2	–	–	7	–	1	–	2	–
UNEF II	20	2	1	1	10	–	1	2	1	2
UNDOF	7	1	–	1	4	1	–	–	–	–
UNIFIL	19	2	–	–	9	1	1	1	2	3
UNTAG	51	2	5	2	22	1	3	6	3	9

* NAm = North America (excl. Mexico), n = 2; CAm = Central America and the Caribbean (inc. Mexico), n = 13; SAm = South America, n = 10; Eur = Europe, n = 29; MEa = Middle East, n = 16; SAs = South Asia (Indian subcontinent), n = 6; Asi = Asia, n = 16; Oce = Oceania, n = 4; Afr = Africa, n = 45.
Source: United Nations (1990, pp. 419–449).

Australia, and New Zealand. Table VI presents this information.

Since 1991, there has been a wider geographical dispersion of UN peace-keeping operations, much of this attributable to the 'new world order' in which, it is offered, states can finally unite under the blue flag of the UN without the Cold War overriding issues of international community (Goulding, 1993). Still, some aspects of playing for spheres of influence are apparent yet in the deployment of UN peace-keepers.

For example, some have laid the responsibility for the failure of the UN to move fast enough on the conflict in Bosnia at the feet of the European Community (Higgins, 1993, pp. 473–474). Higgins contends that the EC blocked the UN from acting on Bosnia because the EC saw it as a prime opportunity to pursue several EC objectives: first, EC action in the Bosnian crisis would make the EC look decisive after looking weak in the Gulf War of 1991; second, EC management of the crisis would demonstrate the independence of the EC from Moscow and Washington; third, Bosnia would serve as the case on which the EC could finally devise a common foreign policy; fourth, the various countries involved directly in the crisis could, after the crisis was resolved, be brought into the EC under terms established by the successful intermediary, the EC.

Despite its great expectations for managing the Bosnian crisis, Higgins charges that the EC was not structured to address the Bosnian crisis (the Western European Union defense arm has yet to materialize) and only succeeded in buying time for the Serbs. When the EC finally realized that it could not manage the crisis, it allowed the UN to take up the considerably worsened crisis, at which point the Europeans used their power in the UN to block effective and forceful UN action.

5.3 The Perceptions of the Peace-keepers
The perception of the peace-keeper is the most important aspect of the historical

record, but also the most problematic. The official pronouncements of national leaders reflect their ambitious public relations campaigns about their commitment to the international community. Still, sometimes the peace-keepers make their views and their interests very clear without rhetoric. The self-interested motivation behind states' participation in UN peace-keeping is unmistakable in the words and actions of some key peace-keepers.

The UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), too recent to be included in the data analyzed above, provides a clear illustration of the self-interested actions of peace-keepers. On 5 September 1993, seven Nigerian peace-keeping soldiers were killed in Mogadishu. The *Christian Science Monitor* (Press, 1993, p. 3) reported that 'the Nigerian deaths were directly linked to a "deal" that an Italian contingent of UN troops had cut previously with Somalis in the same area as the attack'. When the Nigerians 'apparently refused to acknowledge or accept such a pact' and continued with their search operation they were ambushed. 'Somali eyewitnesses said the Italians stood by and refused to come to the assistance of the Nigerians during the attack' (Press, 1993, p. 3). The report added that considerable division existed within the peace-keeping forces over most matters, with commanders calling their national governments for direction before carrying out their assignments at every step of the UN operation.

Italy is no occasional peace-keeper; between 1945 and 1990, Italy was the seventh most frequent participant. Despite this strong record, the Italians apparently did not consider negotiating their own arrangement to protect Italian troops exclusively a violation of the principle of acting on behalf of the community. Indeed, if peace-keeping is really supposed to be neutral, it is difficult to imagine why Italy, the former colonial master, would be included in UNOSOM II.

When peace-keepers check with their governments before carrying out their duties or cut separate deals in the field, they are not acting on behalf of the community. Indeed, members of the unified forces have

suffered and died because states are retaining the right to judge what is best for their own troops within a given peace-keeping operation. Higgins (1993, p. 471) cites this as one of the most fundamental flaws in the way that countries have interpreted the UN Charter and their obligations to the UN community as enumerated in the Charter.

Another recent example of a casualty of national self-interest is the UN operation in the Western Sahara (MINURSO). MINURSO, according to Durch (1993, p. 169), has yet to be fully operational for two reasons: first, neither party to the conflict (Morocco and POLISARIO) has given up the idea of winning; and, second, most of the Security Council Big Five have been indifferent to the situation in the Western Sahara. The only permanent members who have shown any interest in the Western Sahara are France and the USA, both of whom have been and continue to be pro-Moroccan. The Secretary-General was able to get the Security Council to agree to MINURSO by capitalizing upon the warm glow of unity that characterized the preparations for and execution of the Gulf War of 1991; but otherwise there has been little, if any, sustained interest in it. Reviewing MINURSO and the typical pattern of UN peace-keeping, Durch (1993, p. 170) concludes: 'Peacekeepers are confidence-builders, verifiers, and, if necessary, whistle-blowers, but their heaviest guns are in the presidential suites of the great powers.' With some of the great powers disinterested and others only slightly interested and biased, MINURSO will never keep the peace in the Western Sahara.

The views of Canadians about peace-keeping may be the most telling, given Canada's place in the creation of peace-keeping and its role as peace-keeper extraordinaire. Granatstein (1992) reviewed Canadian involvement in UN peace-keeping and concluded that from the start Canadians were reluctant supporters. Lester Pearson's initial suggestion that the British and French would act as peace-keepers in the Suez Crisis followed an earlier Canadian reluctance to participate in the UN observer mission on the Indian–Pakistani border

launched in January 1949 (UNMOGIP). Granatstein (1992, p. 225) has concluded that the general Canadian mood was to resist sending troops into wars without having a say in the decision to go to war, not too different from the Italian deal to protect its troops in Somalia, and, indeed, not too different from Bill Clinton's list of prerequisites that the UN must address before the USA will agree to participate in any more peace-keeping operations. When Canada did agree to participate in UNMOGIP, it was largely because of the missionary impulses of Lester Pearson and Canada's presence in the Security Council at the time of the deployment of UN troops (Granatstein, 1992, p. 225).

Another part of Canada's pedigree as international peace-keeper was outside the UN as part of the International Control Commission (ICC) organized to help mediate issues in the wake of the French departure from Southeast Asia (Granatstein, 1992; Thakur, 1984, 1980). Canada was to serve as the Western state on a three-country commission with Poland and India. The Canadians were reluctant (again) to participate in the ICC because of worries of offending the USA. However, membership in the ICC turned out to be a 'blessing in disguise' because it protected Canada from having to support the USA in Vietnam with Canadian troops. Canada did use its place on the ICC, however, to gather information for the USA. As Granatstein (1992, p. 227) concluded: 'It was obviously sometimes hard to separate the peacekeeper's duty from that of the anti-communist ally.'

The importance of Canadian ties to the USA was not lost on the international community, at least that part of the community that made decisions regarding UN peace-keeping. After reviewing the entire Canadian record on UN peace-keeping, Granatstein (1992, p. 231) determined that Canada was an international favorite for peace-keeping because of its NATO and USA ties, not for its inherent neutralism but because Canada was a NATO power. Paradoxically, involvement in peace-keeping gave Canada the *appearance* of independence from the USA – which was important

for domestic politics – without giving the USA any concerns about Canada's real intentions and loyalties.[6]

An editorial in a popular Canadian news magazine editorial early in 1993 called for a reassessment of UN peace-keeping operations, the key point being a Canadian claim to greater UN status, including a place as a 'permanent associate member' of the Security Council (Doyle, 1993, p. 4). This claim to special status is likely once again to meet indifference or resistance from the great powers. Despite the so-called 'new world order' and despite the many states laying substantial claim to the right to permanent membership, the Big Five seem no more likely now to open their club to others.

At a recent conference on 'Middle Powers in the New World Order', Kim Richard Nossal concluded that the world is seeing the end, or at least the temporary retirement, of 'middle power diplomacy' (Hayes, 1994, p. 12). The middle power idea and middle power role was dependent upon the great power tensions during the Cold War and driven by the responsibility to protect the world from great power war. Nossal echoed other scholars when he posited that the so-called middle powers are no more inclined than other states to internationalism (see, for example, Holbraad, 1984; Wood, 1988). The difference between middle powers and other states during the Cold War was that the position of the middle powers vis-a-vis the great powers presented the middle powers with the responsibility for mitigating great power tensions (but only when they were not needed as loyal supporters). In the absence of great power tensions, the middle powers will pull away from internationalism. Middle powers are not the 'international citizens' depicted by the idealist literature on peace-keeping.

The Canadian withdrawal of troops from Cyprus particularly supports Nossal's argument. The UN peace-keeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) is no closer to completing its mission than when it first began in March 1964, yet the Canadians no longer feel any need to support the international effort. However, the Canadians are very much involved in the UN operations in

Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti – all global 'hot spots' of high international profile in which states may be positioning themselves as the 'great powers' of the emerging world order.

Indeed, the Canadian conference on 'Middle Powers in the New World Order', itself, may suggest the real and enduring interests of these ersatz international peace-keepers: not one paper was presented on nor much discussion given to international peace-keeping. The topic that dominated the discussion was economic multilateralism (Hayes, 1994).

6. *Discussion*

Ultimately, there is little evidence in support of the idealist explanation of state participation in UN peace-keeping. In terms of who participates and how they participate, in terms of where peace-keeping operations get launched, in terms of the impressions of peace-keepers and observers, states participate in peace-keeping to serve their own interests. The particular interests that have been served by UN peace-keeping are those of the Western states whose interests are served by the status quo and a few non-Western states that lay claim to some prestige in international affairs through their UN activities. These states have dominated peace-keeping and probably will continue to do so as a means by which they exercise control over the international community.

If there were some enduring interest in the international community that has and will manifest itself in peace-keeping operations, then we might expect to hear less, rather than more, international dismay over the over-reach of the UN in its ongoing peace-keeping operations. We might also expect to hear less, rather than more, rhetoric from national capitals over the fear of being 'sucked into' peace-keeping operations. I concur with Higgins's (1993, p. 471) disdain for national calls for guarantees in peace-keeping as expressed in her assessment of the failure of UN peace-keeping in the former Yugoslavia: 'The integrity of the Charter's collective security system was not intended to be dependent upon states' perceptions of where their national interest lay.'

Finally, we might expect to see a real opening of UN peace-keeping to include more of the world's states in the decision-making process and execution of peace-keeping operations. Indeed, if this is an era in which the claimed internationalist imperative of peace-keepers can finally guide the international community free of Cold War politicization and stalemate, we might expect to see states pressing for full enactment of the UN Charter that would make peace-keeping the responsibility of all states. But such an aperture would not be in the interests of the dominant and aspiring powers. Again, Higgins (1993, pp. 471–472) has spoken of this: 'At the moment we have the phenomenon of the key Security Council powers insisting on the one hand that they alone cannot do everything, and on the other hand refusing to proceed to those intended Charter provisions that would ensure that others too have a role to play in collective security under Chapter VII.'

There is something compelling and hopeful in the idea that there could be states whose idealist commitment to the international community causes them to act as good international citizens. A handful of such states might be able to convince others in the community to act cooperatively to resolve the many problems confronting the globe. So, the *idea* of the idealist middle power, or idealist peace-keeper, is one that inspires hope and calm in the face of international uncertainty. Nonetheless, the *idea*, at least regarding UN peace-keeping, may be only an illusion or an ideal that cannot withstand the evidence that leads us to a more pessimistic conclusion regarding peace-keeping.

At the risk of sounding alarmist, there is a dangerous implication that UN peace-keeping may be undergoing some evolution to include 'peace-making' and 'peace enforcement' activities, as well as to include preventive conflict-avoidance activities (Goulding, 1993; Higgins, 1993). These latter have been called (ominously enough) 'military humanitarianism' and 'aggressive multilateralism'. Given Western domination of UN

peace-keeping and the absence of the re-straining politics of the Cold War, what guarantees are there that the West will not redesign UN peace-keeping to better fit its world management needs?

When the USA and its Western allies used the UN during the Cold War, it was to protect the world from the communists or the empire-seeking intentions of the Soviets. Now the West can claim to be speaking from the moral authority of having 'won' the Cold War and can assert that the world's peoples have spoken on their desire for Western-style political and economic systems. Moreover, given the re-emergence of the 'pacific democracies' fad among Western scholars, it is suggested that the world would be better if the Western democracies enlarge the number of (Western-style) democracies in the world. As Gleditsch (1992) has warned, this could amount to Western interventionist foreign policy behavior bordering on imperialism. The recent expansion of UN peace-keeping activities may indeed signal an era in which sovereignty is eroded, but only for non-Western states.

NOTES

1. We need only to think about the increasing difficulties in sustaining the EU in the face of nationalist resistance to it during what was supposed to be its decade of maturity.
2. The word 'became' is emphasized here because the Canadian notion of middle powers mediating conflicts between the great powers was not what guided Lester Pearson's initial suggestions on how to resolve the Suez Crisis. This is discussed in detail later in this article and in Granatstein (1992).
3. For a discussion of what a 'middle power' is said to be, see Cooper et al. (1993), Neack (1993), and Wood (1988).
4. A representative sample includes Durch (1993), Granatstein (1968), Kearsley (1993), Pelcovits (1984), Rikhye (1984), and Thakur (1984).
5. Peace-keeping forces theoretically comprise troops who are lightly armed, while observer missions comprise unarmed officers. In practice, there is little difference between these two types of peace-keeping operations (United Nations, 1990, p. 8).
6. Granatstein (1992, p. 230) also concludes that Canadians began to view peace-keeping as a good way to test troop readiness in the absence of any real military threat to Canada.

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