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INTRODUCTION

It is said that in a court case in the mid-south a railway company was being charged with responsibility for a grievous accident. A key witness was a local employee of the railroad who came across the evidence that his friend Jim had been run over by a train. He described how he had seen the victim's head on one side of the track, his torso and limbs scattered about. "And what did you think" the defense attorney asked "when you saw these grisly remains?" "Well," he said, "I thought something serious has happened to Jim."

For our purposes something serious has happened to peace operations. A good, but limited idea has been run down, because—in the cases of Bosnia and Somalia—the collective mind was not focused on where we were going and how we were going to get there. The politics were not synchronized with the military realities. As a result the soldiers were asked, like Alice in Wonderland, to believe 25 impossible things before breakfast. The implications of this serious accident spread beyond the fate of any one particular peace operation. They raise a question about the future, not so much of peace operations, but of collective action itself.

For the ball has been lost among the great collective institutions so painfully put together in the past 45 years. Between the UN and NATO, the European Community and the European Union, and between the Security Council and the central agencies of the United Nations, itself, we have seen a painful set of disconnects open up. Now none of this is irreparable. Unlike poor Jim, collective action can be put together again. But we shall need the will and the leadership to do it.

by

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THOROUGH PREPARATION PAYS OFF

Many things have been done in the name of peace operations and done well. To sum up: those operations where there was sound and fully-engaged diplomatic preparation, where the combined civilian-military elements in a peace operation have been fitted in as part of a well-conceived peace process, have worked well. Namibia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique are shining examples. The element of consent, but not the absence of violence (and the two are sometimes thought to be the same thing), has been a constant. Where things have gone badly the constant factors have been: failure to conceive and articulate a political strategy and plan, problems with liaison between the agencies already mentioned, “ad hocery” (sometimes inspired, mostly not), and failure to know how to deal with violence (our famous Mogadishu line).

There may well be, as some of us heard Professor Michael Brenner say the other day in Washington, “a flight from responsibility everywhere.” I am not sure that this is how I would put it. I see, from the perspective of one of the smaller—but nevertheless active—players in the international system, little shrinking from responsibility among the smaller and middle-sized countries. But there is a near calamitous lack of consensus, cohesion, and clear objectives as to how to go about upholding the peace. The major powers cannot stand aside from the search for a solution. Indeed they must lead it. The flight is not so much from responsibility as from a sense of the collective.

FUTURE OPERATIONS REQUIRE SIMILAR COMMITMENT

In looking to the future, we must start with where we came from. Of course we can all look back, with some awe, now, at the singleness of purpose and high resolve with which the West held to its course under the leadership of the United States for upwards of 40 years. Of course it was to be expected that the eye would slip off the mark, the grip slacken, after so major a victory. Equally, it is easier to hold to a commitment to a large and

vastly compulsive cause than to find the way through the web of problems associated with civil strife and breakdown, which so enmeshes us now. But that is the point. We must live in our own times. The challenges we face are a great deal less demanding than those we have been through. They are to do with holding on to what we have, by way of a collective commitment. Ironically, the fact that the problems are less immediate and of a much lower order of difficulty and responsibility exacerbates, rather than eases, the challenge. As Samuel Johnson reminded us, the mind is concentrated wonderfully by the thought that one might be hanged next week.

Peace operations represent a collective commitment. Without a strong strand of collective resolve they will soon be reduced to a very low level of capability and effectiveness. We are told that peace operations can only be effective when there is peace to keep. This is trite and unhelpful. For the evidence is everywhere, we live in a very violent world, a world awash with high-powered weaponry, much of it controlled by characters with an only distant relationship with military discipline and the regimental ethos. Plainly if we are to take it that peace operations are worth doing only when peace has broken out, the technique is not going to be much use to us for trying to meet some of the challenges of the times in which we live. The lion is not likely soon to learn to lie down with the lamb, let alone the other way around. The key is in making the level of military effectiveness commensurate with the particular problems on the ground. The willingness to do that in turn is determined by the degree of political resolution.

Some peace operations—in Somalia (under UNITAF), Haiti and in Northern Ireland—have plainly been very effective although there has been no peace, as usually defined (i.e., the absence of violence) to keep in these places. The forces deployed were well-trained and equipped, militarily more than capable of meeting any opposition they encountered; they had the capacity to defend themselves and their mission. The key lay in the commitment, the political will, of

the authorities responsible for those operations. Without that, peace operations will always be able to function only at the margins of our concerns. Of course, the UNITAF phase in Somalia, like the initial deployment to Haiti and, of course, the British commitment to maintaining the peace in Northern Ireland, were not among the usual run of multinational operations. In each case these operations were carried along by an unusual degree of national commitment and engagement. There is the rub.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT IS CONSTANTLY TESTED

This issue of commitment is about to be tested again and in a different setting. The British-French-Netherlands combined force now being deployed to Bosnia represents a new approach to what has become the central conundrum of peace-keeping: how to add military punch to enable a peace operation to carry out its mandate and protect its people without becoming engaged in the conflict? Will it work? Already the very idea is being dismissed. As the Holy Roman Empire was said to be neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire, so this idea of a rapid reaction force is dismissed as neither rapid nor reactive nor a force. Perhaps cynicism is at the heart of our problems. There is argument about the command structure, who will pay and how much, the lines of responsibility, whether it is a blue helmet or a NATO operation or simply a series of conjoined national initiatives. All this is true to form.

For it is self-evident that without a clear consensus and a well-defined set of aims no coalition can hold together. There can never be an effective coalition without agreement about the key commitments and obligations of the partners. What is it that we should be coalescing around? On what do we have, or ought we to have, a consensus?

INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS EXISTS

Slowly, since the end of the 19th century, a corpus of international treaty commitments has been built up on matters to do with offenses against

the laws of war. The nations have signaled support for definitions of war crimes that include the murder, ill-treatment or deportation of civilian populations. Crimes against humanity are generally held to include political, racial or religious persecution of civilian populations. A United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide has been widely endorsed. Few countries refuse to subscribe to the broad principles relating to the conduct of war, the treatment of prisoners of war and the protection of civilians in time of war enshrined in the Geneva Conventions; many have even endorsed the two 1949 protocols extending protection under the Conventions to guerrilla fighters in wars of self-determination or participants in civil wars able to claim control over significant territory.

All this is enough. In theory, at least, such commitments should provide more than sufficient justification for international action. Most of the principles upheld under this fragile framework of international agreement have in fact been wilfully flouted in the aftermath of the collapse of former Yugoslavia. However, there has been no sustained sense of outrage sufficient to generate a forcible response. Equally, it could be said that all members of the United Nations have, in signing on, made commitments under Chapter VII of the Charter to taking collective action (the emphasis is on *action*) in response to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression. Again it is not easy to relate that commitment to the present disarray in the international community over what to do about Bosnia.

At this conference, I met with General Nambiar. He said this morning that peace operations are here to stay. The occasional setback will not remove the concept from the collective memory. Beleaguered leaders in countries falling apart will continue to want to turn for help to the international community just as the Security Council will instinctively think in terms of fashioning collective responses to crises. No doubt the Bosnian trauma will inspire caution. That may be no

bad thing. The need is to generate much new thinking about how to do better.

As even a casual consideration makes clear, peace operations come in many guises. The concept offers a great range of options for dealing with a world, which in more than a few places, is coming apart at the seams. We rehearsed those options at this workshop in John Sewall's development of the Gerry Yonas model. But all the way through from peacemaking; peacekeeping; expanded peacekeeping; peacebuilding (reconstruction); protective engagement (which General Rupert Smith calls containment); deterrence; to peace enforcement, there are options galore for the policy makers. There is scope for all-comers—the great and the small. What is needed is the effort, the will, and—dare I say it—the leadership to draw it all together to make the pattern cohere. Then all things are possible, a more effective and fair division of peacekeeping labor, more clear-cut directives to the force commanders, coupled with the military means to allow them to use force to defend their people and their mandate.

SMALLER COUNTRIES ALSO PLAY A VITAL ROLE

Now I know all too well from my years in Washington that Americans have trouble looking through the wrong end of the telescope, to see the world of the smaller actors. Smaller countries can usually be expected to support collective action. Perhaps I might be forgiven for observing that New Zealand has done so *cum laude* through all the wars of our terrible century. I like to think of this role as a model of collective security in action. For by all the standards of *realpolitik* where was the direct threat to New Zealand? Indeed, by whatever standards we are applying to Bosnia—of *realpolitik* or otherwise—where is the New Zealand interest in sending troops there, other than as a mark of a commitment to collective security? Of course there aren't many of them—a company of well-trained, professional infantry, 260 soldiers. If we think about it, that number gives an index of what could be done in

this untidy world if we all accepted an equivalency of contribution. I'm not going to get into the old question of whether one New Zealander is worth three Englishmen—or at least five Australians! But New Zealand is a country of only 3.6 million people. There are about 72 times as many Americans. I simply point out that 260 New Zealanders represent the same level of collective commitment as 18,200 Americans.

Involvement in Bosnia has not caused a revolution in New Zealand. Polling, in fact, suggests that New Zealand support for United Nations collective security has gone up several percentage points to 75 percent, since the commitment was made. Support for maintaining effective armed forces has equally increased to 69 percent. The arguments heard in Washington against United States involvement on the ground in former Yugoslavia have nevertheless also been made in New Zealand—and of course, quite shrilly. Plenty of New Zealanders have urged on the government that we too should let this one pass: Bosnia is a long way away, no direct national interests of ours are at stake, New Zealand should stop getting entangled in other people's wars, the Balkans is a quagmire and the people obsessed by ancient hatreds etc., etc. The UN is a mess, couldn't fight it's way out of a paper bag. We too have heard all that. No doubt the same noises are made in Ottawa, London, and Paris.

Clearly collective security will wither away if such arguments prosper. As I said, smaller countries have an instinct for the collective approach; that way, there is scope for covering more of the security imperatives and for maximizing their own, necessarily limited, military capabilities. They gain a seat at the table; a lesser known member of the international community—or one seeking to reposition itself—can claim credit as a constructive player, and so on. The collective principle can, however, obviously work only if the commitment is broadly shared. What is needed is coherence among all interested parties and an ability to interact until the whole process is mutually supportive. This calls for the major players to drive a collective security concept

along. This has always been how alliances have worked. Now it is necessary to apply some of the same impetus to developing the concept of peace operations.

There is a leadership role here, of the highest potential, for the United States. In the broadest sense it would call for articulation of a new collective approach to peace operations. In practical terms it would involve taking the initiative to arrange comprehensive collective military training for peace operations, working with partners and the United Nations to put together a new military doctrine, devising appropriate rules of engagement and ensuring that whatever force is put into the field is backed with the capabilities, so it is not militarily ineffectual when challenged.

I have the feeling—which may be unfair—that over the past five or six years, the liberal international community has suffered from something of a collective rush of blood to the head. In our enthusiasm to believe in a new world order we neglected the importance of the tough old military nuts and bolts needed to make even the palest of collective systems work. The American wit and coiner of aphorisms, Josh Billings, wrote:

If you want a good crop and a sure yield, sow wild oats.

For the plain fact is that, in respect of former Yugoslavia, the international community—or more accurately the Security Council—handed the United Nations what in rugby football is known as a “hospital pass.” This means that you are given the ball in hopeless circumstances and at the very moment when the opposition is best able to do you serious bodily harm. Did UNPROFOR (the UN Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia) ever have much of a chance of reacting firmly and decisively to harassment and obstruction when the military provisions had not been made? In almost all of its dealings on the Gulf War, the Security Council acted with firmness and cohesion. No Fly Zones, Weapons Exclusion Areas, a solid peacekeeping effort in relation to Kuwait, a major intrusion in Northern Iraq, and an extraordinarily intrusive process of

weapons inspection and destruction were all pushed through and backed by the necessary shows of force.

What made the difference? Of course, major strategic interests were engaged in the Gulf; considerations of high security interest were at stake. And then there was the decisive role played by the United States

This raises the question, can comparable will be summoned up where the direct interests may be less pressing, where the issues are to do not with power and grand strategy, but with humanitarian relief and violations of international law? What degree of effectiveness can we hope to attach to peace operations if the major powers are not fully engaged in making the concept work?

At the San Francisco Conference 50 years ago, New Zealand strenuously opposed inclusion in the United Nations Charter of the right of veto to be held by the Permanent Members of the Security Council. Smaller countries, which were not going to get on the Council very often, clearly did not appreciate a concentration of power in the hands of the Permanent five. The rationale for this authority was, of course, the responsibility accorded to the major powers for the maintenance of international peace and security. Decisions of the Council to do with peace and security issues that are not backed by the provision of the necessary military capabilities by the major powers, are clearly not going to increase respect either for the Council or for the powers concerned.

The issues are urgent on several counts: unless it is possible to inspire a certain respect for the will of the international community as expressed, however imperfectly, through the Security Council the broad peace keeping concept will unravel. Without the demonstration of some firmness and resolve to back the commitments states have made to international law, what is sure to be a very untidy opening to the 21st century could become disastrously unstable.

THE PEACEKEEPING PROCESS NEEDS REEXAMINATION

In thinking again about what is needed to improve the future for peace operations—the subject of our conference—I suggest that we must focus on the point that so called “first generation” peace keeping cannot simply be expanded, as we have tended to do in the past few years. Rather it is necessary to rethink ways and means. If the central problem is to control violence to promote peace processes, it will no longer be sufficient simply to deploy lightly armed peacekeepers, entirely subject to the whim of every local warlord. If war is the continuation of politics by other means, peace operations are perhaps the continuation of diplomacy by other means. However, where violence is a fundamental part of the equation, the pursuit of peace is compromised, unless the peacekeepers can, at least, defend themselves. This makes at least some parts of the peace operations spectrum a form of diplomacy by military means.

It is properly said that good soldiers make good peacekeepers. The reference, however, is not to military aggressiveness but to the key soldierly qualities of discipline, restraint in the use of force, the ability to communicate and manage what is going on. Effective command and control are also fundamental. Dag Hammarskjöld’s oft-quoted remark still holds true, “It’s not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it.” This does not mean that the good soldiers must always turn the other cheek. Humiliation of the kind meted out by the Bosnian Serbs in the past few days is plainly unacceptable.

Effective capabilities for self-defense seem to be a minimum requirement for future deployments in areas where violence is endemic. This includes close fire support and close air cover. Can such capabilities be used without crossing the so called “Mogadishu line” and involving the United Nations itself in war? I suggest that they can, if we make a sufficient distinction between upholding the mandate and taking war to an

enemy. A reality check makes it quite clear that the world community cannot entertain the notion of putting together comprehensive capabilities actually to “enforce peace” very often; the Gulf and Korea are the only clear-cut examples. This is not the same issue as the provision of sufficient military capabilities to allow a peace operation to defend itself and to carry out the mandate it has been given. That can be done and the Great Powers can rally a great deal of support from the rest of the international community to do it, if they can themselves summon up the will.

PUT PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

I sense that peace operations are in tune with the temper of our times. Only a fool would pretend that war is going out of fashion. But equally it is plain that the liberal democracies’ distaste for war is now a major factor in political life. How things have changed from the early years of this century: a headlong charge at the guns yielded 60,000 casualties in a morning on the opening day of the First Battle of the Somme; today there is concern that even a single American casualty could compromise a, so far, very successful peace operation in Haiti! Whatever their faults, peace operations stand for prudence and restraint in military matters. Perhaps things do get better after all. Immediately before the First World War there was an all-in Balkans War of extreme ferocity and with much bloodletting. The major countries of the West paid little attention. Now a similar event shames us all. Hopefully we can now move on to finding effective techniques for making the modest, but useful tool of peacekeeping more useful. It will not end war or solve the grand strategic issues, but to adjust peace operations to the modern realities must offer new hope. That way the collective principle will be given new life. The military establishments are responding to this new challenge. The political establishments must follow.