

Extended Peacekeeping: Planning and Technical Requirements: Lessons from Recent Operations 4

INTRODUCTION

Rapidly losing interest in their global confrontation, in the late 1980s the two superpowers handed over a number of old regional conflicts to the United Nations for management or resolution. In cases such as Namibia-Angola, Cambodia, the Iran-Iraq war, Afghanistan and Nicaragua, the world organization appeared up to that expanded role and in fact created increasing expectations about its ability to deal with important crises whenever they would appear. Free from their relationship with two competing global subsystems, most such conflicts—and new ones, such as Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda—revealed the underlying and hard-to-deal-with nature of civil and ethnic strife.

Responding to the new pressure for intervention, the dimension and functions of the UN peacekeeping forces expanded enormously. The number of UN personnel (mostly military) brought into Cambodia starting in 1991, was close to 20,000. In 1993 the UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) included more than 30,000 people. Even larger was the total force deployed in three republics of former Yugoslavia—Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia—beginning in 1992.¹

The UN operations became increasingly multidimensional in character and came to be carried out in ever more complex operational environments (compared with past peacekeeping operations). The list of tasks performed expanded to include, besides the most traditional one of separation of forces, also electoral support, humanitarian assistance and movement of refugees and displaced persons; mine clearance; observation and verification of cease-fire agreements; foreign troop withdrawal; preventive deployments; demobilization of forces; collection, custody and

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destruction¹ of weapons; and disarming paramilitary forces, private, and irregular units.² As indicated in the following pages the lists of tasks further expanded with the international interventions in former Yugoslavia and in Somalia.

Responding to the pressure that the United Nations must manage or solve complex crises, the UN Security Council has increasingly authorized, in recent operations, the use of military force to achieve different humanitarian or political goals. Depending on the environments, the results are different. However, most notably in former Yugoslavia, the difficulty of mixing the humanitarian operation on the ground with limited elements of peace-enforcement has come dramatically to the surface.

The expanded role of the UN has also produced a wealth of analyses and proposals that argue for the international community to be given broader rights to intervene in the internal affairs of troubled states. Many analyses suggest ways to enhance the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions, and ways to adapt the organizational structure of the UN—and of the Secretariat in particular—to the new demand. A sort of taxonomy has been adopted in the writings of UN staff and scholars classifying the different peace-support operations of the UN on the basis of its broader objectives. Successes and failures of different UN operations were then explained on the basis of such typology.

Much of the analyses contributed importantly to clarify the conditions and the environment for UN peace-support operations. And of course

improvements in the organizational structures and organizational capabilities of the UN were and are very much needed. However, those analyses and proposals also risk feeding the illusion that the issue is essentially technical in character, that there existed the analytic and doctrinal capability to define the path to the achievement of most objectives. They contribute to legitimize a political conception of the United Nations as an organization responsible for and capable of—beyond its establishing the legitimacy of a given position—“policing” the world.

By looking at the international interventions in Somalia and in former Yugoslavia, the present essay focuses on the genesis of and conditioning present in recent UN operations. Its aim is to clarify the reasons for the difficulties in which the United Nations has found itself in such operations.

PEACEKEEPING AND PEACE-ENFORCEMENT

As further clarified in another chapter of the present volume, the first thing the commanders of UN forces need is a clear and achievable mandate for their mission.³ The mandate determines the appropriate military doctrine. The doctrine employed is essential for the operation on the ground: it shapes the organization, training and force equipment. Those leading UN peace operations know precisely what they can achieve with the kind of forces at their disposal. However, the mandate for the forces is what has become increasingly confused in recent UN operations.

¹ The deployment figures given here for recent operations are approximate figures of actual forces deployment. The strength of the force deployed changes in long-lasting operations. Authorized strength was different in most cases. And in cases such as UNOSOM II, the large UN contingent had some U.S. military personnel in it and was closely supported by other U.S. forces. In comparison with those recent operations, older ones required much smaller peacekeeping contingents. The Cyprus UN operation, started in 1964, included about 2,200 people, and 1,100 military personnel were deployed in the Golan Heights after the Golan Agreement of 1974. In the 1980s there was a UN force of 5,600 people in Lebanon, and one of about 6,000 people in Namibia. An exceptional case during the Cold War was the Congo UN operation in the early 1960s, involving almost 20,000 people. See *The Blue Helmets* (New York, United Nations, 1990); Joseph Preston Baratta, *International Peacekeeping: History and Strengthening* (Washington, D.C., Center for U.N. Reform Education, November 1989); UNDPI, “Background Note: United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations” (January 1993); Bo Huldt, “Working Multilaterally: The Old Peacekeepers’ Viewpoint,” in Donald C.F. Daniel and Bradd C. Hayes, *Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping* (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1995).

² See Mats R. Berdal, *Adelphi paper 281: Whither UN Peacekeeping?* (Brassey’s for The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, October 1993), pp. 11–ff; Paul F. Diehl, *International Peacekeeping* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), especially Ch. 6.

³ See paper by John O.B. Sewall in this report.

The then UN Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs, Sir Brian Urquhart, warned in early 1990 about the need to maintain the classical conditions for peacekeeping missions:

- impartiality, and consent of all parties involved,
- a clear and practicable mandate,
- and the non-use of force except for self-defense.⁴

These were the classical conditions of UN “holding operations,” carried out by UN troops interposed between the combatants while a solution to the conflict was negotiated.

Inevitably, in the context of the enormously expanded responsibilities of the UN, those criteria were bound to be eroded. Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s *Agenda for Peace* (early 1992) first blurred important definitions. While recommending a clear distinction between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations, and separating the role of the UN Military Staff Committee from peacekeeping, he still came to the conclusion that “there may not be a dividing line between peacemaking (a concept in which he included peace-enforcement) and peacekeeping.”

We are clearly, with “An Agenda for Peace,” in the post-“Gulf operation” era. And in fact Boutros-Ghali went on defining the requirements for peace-enforcement missions (to respond to acts of “outright aggression”) and advocating the implementation of Article 43 of the UN Charter, that is the creation of UN permanent armed forces available to “dete[r] breaches of the peace.” On the same line of thinking, in 1993 he began to promote and articulate the idea of a standby force structure for the United Nations, “able to be deployed ... anywhere in the world, at the Secretary General’s request.”⁵

Important, recent analyses are critical of that stretching of the confines of the peacekeeping

operations. To former UN Assistant Secretary-General Giandomenico Picco the intrusion of the Secretary-General into the peace-enforcement domain has compromised the most important and successful functions of that institution—based, as they need to be on absolute impartiality.⁶ The author of the British Army Peacekeeping manual, Charles Dobbie, concludes, in a recent article, that “peacekeeping and peace-enforcement are... separate and mutually exclusive activities that cannot be mixed.”⁷ While it is easy to share such criticism, it is also important to find out the reasons for the more ambitious, present disposition of the UN and of its Secretary General. The Somali and Yugoslav experiences may be particularly illustrative in this respect.

INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA

Starting with the first deployment of UN military observers, there were three phases of the UN and multinational military intervention in Somalia. After a small contingent of military observers had been deployed in Somalia (decided upon in March, carried out in July 1992), with its Resolution 751 (April 24, 1992) the UN Security Council decided to establish a UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). In August the UN Secretary General proposed the deployment of 500 more security personnel in the capital Mogadishu. Eventually this first phase of the UNOSOM will include over 4,200 individuals in different capacities.

When the UN Secretary General, Boutros-Ghali, asked for the deployment of the 500 peacekeepers in the capital, he clarified that such deployment had the consent of the main faction leaders. Already in this phase, however, the mandate of the UN forces begun to expand. In July, the Secretary General suggested that the UN needed to “adapt” its involvement in Somalia. Besides charging the UNOSOM with the task of

⁴ “Beyond The Sheriff’s Posse,” *Survival*, May–June 1990.

⁵ Briefing by Colonel Gerard Gambiez, at the United Nations, April 14, 1994.

⁶ “The UN and the Use of Force. Leave the Secretary-General Out of It,” *Foreign Affairs*, September–October 1994.

⁷ “A Concept for Post-Cold War Peacekeeping”, *Survival*, Autumn 1994.

protecting the humanitarian convoys and distribution centers, Boutros-Ghali in August was also asking that the UN forces establish a “preventive zone” on the Kenya-Somali border.⁸

The second phase was brought about by the worsening situation in Somalia and was characterized by the decision of the United States to intervene in the region. The offer made by then Acting Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, to the UN Secretary General on November 25, 1992 brought the creation of a Unified Task Force (UNITAF), the first elements of which reached Mogadishu on 9 December.⁹

Led by a United States commander, General Robert Johnston, UNITAF’s main objective was to establish a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Once this task was accomplished, the military command of the international force was to be turned over to the United Nations. There was an open and rather noisy disagreement about the scope of the mission UNITAF was to carry out, with Washington wishing to keep it well defined and limited. The UN Secretary General, in contrast, maintained that Washington had committed itself originally to disarm the warring factions.¹⁰ When fully deployed, UNITAF was composed of about 37,000 troops from 24 countries, deployed in the capital and Southern and Central Somalia. The United States contingent was over 20,000 strong.

The next phase began on May 4, 1993 with the transfer of the military command. On March 3 the UN Secretary General had advised the Security Council (SC) that such steps be taken.¹¹ In the same letter the Secretary General defined the mandate for UNOSOM II in a never-seen-before long list of tasks. The SC acted on those propos-

als and adopted Resolution 814 on March 26, 1993.

Subsequently, the Secretary General appointed a United States retired admiral, with good connections in Washington, Jonathan T. Howe, as his new Special Representative for Somalia, and a Turkish general, Cevik Bir as Force Commander of UNOSOM II.

The originally authorized strength of UNOSOM II was approximately 28,000 military personnel and 2,800 civilian staff. In addition, there were about 17,700 troops in the U.S. Joint Task Force in Somalia, including the Quick Reaction Force deployed in support of UNOSOM II. The total number of countries participating in the force was 29. An important feature of this phase of the intervention is that the U.S. forces were not under the operational command of General Bir. However, the commander of the U.S. forces, General Thomas Montgomery, was also the deputy Force Commander of UNOSOM.

■ Too Little and Too Much Force, and the Expectations Created by the U.S. Intervention

A specific feature of the international operation in Somalia is the high level of force employed almost from the beginning. The rule of consent of the contending parties was applied only at the very beginning, in phase one. Unquestionably there was a problem of general anarchy and of lack of interlocutors. However the high level of force used has also to do with the conditioning created by the participation of individual countries, beginning with the United States, and with the pressure on the United Nations to stretch its capabilities.

⁸ UN documents S/24343, S/24480.

⁹ UNSC Resolution 794, December 3, 1992. The Resolution, “[w]elcomes the offer by a Member State... concerning the establishment of an operation to create [a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia], and, [a]cting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, authorizes the Secretary-General and Member States cooperating to implement the [above mentioned] offer... to use all necessary means” to assure the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

¹⁰ The UN Secretary General recommended, in a report presented to the Security Council in late December (S/24992), that the Council defer its decision on the transition from the United States to the UNOSOM II, and wait for the establishment of a cease-fire, the control of heavy weapons, the disarming of the gang and the formation of a new police force. Washington wanted the UN to take over on January 22, 1993.

¹¹ UN document S/25354.

Moreover, the character of the operation and the level of risk for all international forces appears to have changed dramatically with the decision to single out General Aidid (Mohammed Farah Assan) as the enemy. While force before had been used mostly against independent armed bands, such decision made UNSOM side with one and against the other of the two main factions fighting for the control of the capital.

How deeply such a decision affected the environment in which the international forces operated was shown by the ambushes in which first a group of Pakistani peacekeepers fell on June 5, and the resulting 25 killed with more than 50 wounded. The response authorized by the Security Council only further characterized the UN operation as a war against General Aidid.¹²

If the commanding officers of the Italian contingent had hoped to escape the difficulties of this phase, especially in Mogadishu, because of the dialogue they had established with the different parties, their hope was shattered on July 2, when three Italian peacekeepers were killed in another large-scale battle, and the Italian contingent had to abandon an important checkpoint in the city it had manned for some time. Then came the turn of the U.S. forces. When U.S. Rangers (in coordination with the UN command), on October 3 and 4, launched an operation in Southern Mogadishu aimed at capturing some of Aidid's men, they encountered a fierce resistance that resulted in the downing of five United States helicopters and the deaths of 18 men. The hatred treatment to which the dead bodies were subjected reached the American homes through the TV screen and was decisive in bringing President Clinton to set a deadline for the withdrawal of the U.S. troops. In the remaining months of its presence there, the American contingent drastically lowered its profile in the attempt to contain the number of possible casualties.

Expectedly the increased level of danger brought to the fore conflicting viewpoints and controversy about the chain of command. Most acutely the controversy flared between the UN command and that of the Italian force (ITALFOR). ITALFOR leaders vented out their frustration by accusing the Americans of using needless force.¹³ Aidid on his part made clear, after the killing of the Italian soldiers, that he had intentionally punished the Italians for their increased alignment with Admiral Howe's policies.¹⁴ The incident grew worse out of the demand by the UN command that the Italians reconquer the checkpoint they had abandoned—and out of the explicit invitation of Italian Defense Minister Fabio Fabbri telling ITALFOR Commander, General Bruno Loi, to disregard the UN demand.

When the Italian command instead negotiated a return of the UN troops to the checkpoint, that negotiation was harshly criticized by the UNOSOM commanders. And when the U.S. Quick Reaction Force unleashed its Cobra helicopters against militia men and leaders of Aidid faction (killing 70 people), and the enraged population in South Mogadishu stoned and clubbed to death 4 journalists and photographers who were covering the incident. The Italian Council of Ministers went as far as to issue a declaration of disassociation from the UNOSOM operation.

These harsh exchanges often found extra fuel in stories and second hand information run by some newspapers and magazines. On the other side, in an article aptly titled "Machiavelli vs. Rambo" the *New York Times* suggested that the policy of dialogue and compromise attempted by the Italians seemed in the end more productive than the offensive tactics of the American forces and of the UN command.¹⁵ After the first American casualties, at the end of September, United States President Bill Clinton abandoned the aggressive policy supported up to that point. And, notwithstanding the strong reaction by the

¹² UNSC Resolution 837, June 6, 1993.

¹³ See, for instance, General Loi's interview in *La Stampa*, June 17, 1993.

¹⁴ See his interview with *Famiglia Cristiana*, July 14, 1993.

¹⁵ July 20, 1994.

UN Secretary General, after the incidents of October 3 and 4, the President set the deadline for the withdrawal of the American contingent and announced that the U.S. forces were no longer going to wage a “personal” war directed at General Aidid.

In retrospect, it appears that force employed in Somalia was too little and too much at the same time.¹⁶ It was too little for the task set out by the UN Security Council of disarming the warring factions and of disposing of General Aidid. Therefore it was too much, and somewhat counterproductive, for an operation supporting humanitarian objectives, or if a strategy of negotiation and compromise was the necessary way to approach the situation in Somalia.

There have been attempts to precisely characterize the international intervention in Somalia. Some observers have pointed out that it was “peace-making,” rather than “peace-keeping....” UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali chose to qualify it as “peace-enforcing.” But, more than the category in which to box the Somali operation, it is important to explain the ineffective—and in the end counterproductive—use that was made of military force there.

The American administration’s decision to intervene in Somalia is central to such explanation. Washington had its political reasons (both domestic and international), in late November 1992, for staging a large-scale operation to support humanitarian relief in that country. And the offer made by Eagleburger was hard to pass up for the UN Secretary General due to the pressure he felt to deal effectively with the issue. From a UN perspective, the UNITAF operation initiated a phase of “subcontracting” UN operations to individual powers or multinational forces. (There were parallel talks with NATO, at the time, about possible forms of military intervention by the Atlantic allies in Bosnia-Herzegovina.)

In his letter to the Security Council of 29 November 1992, Boutros-Ghali outlined, for the

Council consideration, five options for creating conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid inside Somalia. If a country-wide show of force (rather than an operation limited to the capital) was the preferred option, it was impossible for the United Nations to carry out such missions because, the Secretary General noticed, the UN did not have the capability of command and control for an operation of the size required. The last option, that, based on Washington’s offer, the UN authorizes a group of member states to carry out such operation, was the one that Boutros-Ghali advised the Council to choose.¹⁷

Most relevant, once more, was that it was a United States-led operation. It was, in other words, a small-scale “Gulf” operation, with other countries joining the United States. The fact that the American commander, General Robert Johnston, had been the deputy commander in the Gulf war, further enhanced his authority and the willingness of other national contingents to be led. Like in the Gulf, there was a main actor on the stage and a number of minor interpreters around him. And the expectations with regards to the solution of the ugly Somali problems grew accordingly—results here expected to be Gulf-style, decisive.

However, in contrast with the Gulf crisis (where the United States took early action and then obtained UN authorization), in Somalia the United States took over an operation already initiated by the UN. And the United States intervention suggested to the UN Secretary General the possibility of setting more ambitious objectives. The option he advised the Security Council to choose, was also the one containing the most ambitious objectives. Indeed, rather than the executor being the variable and the objectives the constant, it was the other way around, that is to say the objectives were defined on the basis of the United States being the executor. Only the United States could achieve those goals. And, as I have already indicated, the UN Secretary General kept putting pressure on the United States

¹⁶ Such observation was offered, in an interview with me, by a senior Italian foreign service official who had been involved with the Italian operation in Somalia.

¹⁷ UN document S/24868. As a consequence, the SC adopted Resolution 794, on December 3, quoted in footnote 9, above.

for acting more forcefully and moving to disarm the warring factions.

If phase two (UNITAF) of the international intervention in Somalia had been a small “Gulf” operation, phase three (UNOSOM II) did not have one of the positive features of such operation—especially tight command and control, and the weight that carried the United States leadership—while it received a lot of negative conditioning from it. The attempt by the UN Secretary General to maintain much of the same character to the operation by putting Admiral Howe at its head, made some foreseeable, emerging problems only sharper.

In his report to the Security Council concerning the transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II, Boutros-Ghali also laid out in detail the possible mandate for the new UN operation.¹⁸ UNOSOM II would attempt to bring to completion, through disarmament and reconciliation, the task begun by UNITAF for the restoration of peace, stability, law and order. Among specific military tasks, UNOSOM was to monitor the cessation of hostilities, preventing the resumption of violence also by taking action, when necessary, against factions violating the cessation of the hostilities, seizing small arms and maintaining control of heavy weapons, securing and maintaining the security of ports, airports, and lines of communications needed for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The report also contained overambitious goals of nation-building: UNOSOM II would help the Somali people to rebuild their economy and social and political life, to restore the country’s institutions and the Somali State. It was more than UNITAF had set out to achieve. At the same time the individuals under the UN commander were fewer and less well coordinated than in the previous phase.

THE UNITED NATIONS IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The United Nations first entered former Yugoslavia under what could be considered classical UN-peacekeeping conditions. UNSC Resolu-

tions 743 and 749 (February 21 and April 7, 1992) established and authorized full deployment of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to consolidate the cease-fire in Croatia and assure the demilitarization of a number of designated UN “protected areas” there (areas with large Serb population).

Already envisioned by UNSC Resolution 721 of November 27, 1991, the peacekeeping operation was made conditional to the compliance by all warring parties of the Geneva cease-fire agreement earlier negotiated by the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy, Mr. Cyrus Vance. Before he finally recommended to the Security Council the establishment of the force in mid-February, the Secretary General had reported on a number of occasions that the necessary conditions for its establishment did not exist.

The original mandate was then enlarged a number of times (UNSC Resolutions 762, 769 and 779)—both to expand the areas under UN control and to solidify the control of those areas. However those tasks were established and carried out always in a context of consent at least by the main contending parties. The same applies to UNSC Resolution 758, of June 8, 1992, that enlarged the UNPROFOR’s mandate to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Resolution was adopted after the Secretary General reported that UN personnel had negotiated an agreement for the handing over to the UN of the airport in Sarajevo.

In the context of the Yugoslav conflict it is impossible to precisely define the conditions for consent. The “consent” to open the Sarajevo airport to humanitarian flights in mid-1992 was obtained through strong pressures by different Western capitals, the European Community (EC) and other international organizations. Different means of influence were brought to bear on the Bosnian Serbs. And in the following years, that airport would stay open only intermittently. Moreover, the consent was not always negotiated

¹⁸ UN document S/25354, March 3, 1993.

with the individual armed groups controlling a specific territory.¹⁹

Finally, even if the intervention is clearly defined as a humanitarian mission, the limits of such a mission are very difficult to establish. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the early mandate of protecting the humanitarian convoys organized by the UN High Commissioner of Refugees and other organizations broadened with time to include a multiplicity of tasks related to such an objective and to the need to protect civilians: silencing of sniper fire, taking control of heavy weapons to stop the shelling of cities, and protecting six Security Council-designated “safe areas.”²⁰ However, when it decided on the specific measures to make possible delivery of humanitarian aid or took initiatives such as the creation of the “safe areas” to protect the Muslim population against “ethnic cleansing,” the Security Council necessarily entered the fray, challenging and resisting the policies of one or more of the contending parties.

If keeping a humanitarian mission within the consent confines is already difficult, the character of the intervention changes profoundly when the Security Council decides to authorize the use—however selective—of force to reach its goals. In the case of former Yugoslavia it was the pressure from the Western European and American publics—in the face of ineffective international action and terribly upsetting news reports—that kept pushing those already hard-to-define boundaries of the humanitarian mission toward an increasingly assertive use of military force and the attempt to redress the balance of forces on the ground.

Because of that pressure of the public and because Washington, after a long period of abstention, decided to participate in the international response to the crisis, NATO first made

itself available in support of CSCE and UN operations in June 1992. Washington selected NATO as the most suitable channel for its positions and objectives. And in the following years, Washington would be the main thrust behind the escalatory intervention of the Western alliance, in particular from August 1993 (when NATO intervened to stop the strangulation of Sarajevo) on.

NATO participation in the international response necessarily changed the character of that response and of the UN operations in particular. In fact the environment for the UN humanitarian operation always remained very uncertain despite commitments undertaken by all the parties at the London Conference of August 1992. Moreover, even when considered in isolation, the very availability of NATO tended to lower the threshold of the conditions considered necessary for successful implementation of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. Thus, for instance, in March 1994, after the show of international resolve that followed the Sarajevo market-place massacre, UN officers promised a more “muscular” approach and the decision was taken to send a relief convoy to the Muslim enclave of Maglaj in central Bosnia, with the assistance of NATO aircraft circling overhead. The town had been under Serb siege and shelling for months and subsisting on supplies dropped from the air.²¹

In general, the availability of NATO air power afforded the international intervention the possibility of pursuing broader objectives and thus responding to the increasing pressures of the Western publics on governments. It offered the only possibility for enforcing a tangle of Security Council’s decisions poorly coordinated and in most cases unenforceable. NATO took over operations that the UN by itself could not carry out. The enforcement of the “no-fly-zone” is a case in point.

¹⁹ Henry Wynaendts in *L'engrange. Croniques yougoslaves. Juillet 1991–août 1992* (Paris, Editions Donoel, 1993) chronicles the painstaking negotiations carried out as representative of the EC Presidency with individual military commanders in Croatia to obtain their agreement to the terms of different cease-fires.

²⁰ On the broad range of tasks connected with “humanitarian” operations in the recent UN experience see Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1995).

²¹ For a chronicle of the Western intervention see Mario Zucconi, “The former Yugoslavia: Lessons of war and diplomacy,” *SIRPI Yearbook 1995* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995).

UNSC Resolutions 781 and 786 (October 9 and November 10, 1992) established a ban on military flight in the airspace of Bosnia-Herzegovina and mandated the monitoring of the ban to UNPROFOR. NATO took over the enforcement of the ban after a report of the UN Secretariat listing 465 violations (including planes that bombed Bosnian villages) prompted UNSC Resolution 816 (March 31, 1993). The Resolution called on member states to take “all necessary measures... in the event of further violation.” NATO’s “Deny Flight” operation started April 12, 1993. The Serb planes downed on February 28, 1994 were the first fixed-wing aircraft to violate the ban since the start of the allied operation.

The same can be said of the “safe areas.” When established by the Security Council (Resolutions 819 and 824 of April 16 and May 6, 1993), the UN Secretary General estimated that 34,000 troops were necessary to enforce the decision. Later the UN commander of the time lowered the requirement to some 900 peacekeeper for each of five such areas, and a larger number for Sarajevo. However, such force—possibly capable of preventing a Serb attempt to take over those areas—was never deployed (in Gorazde, at the beginning of the April 1994 Serb attack, the UN had only four observers). And the continued Serb pressure on those areas put the few UN troops there in danger.

Therefore, with Resolution 836 of June 4, 1993 the UNSC greatly expanded the mandate of UNPROFOR—authorized now to reply to the bombardment and to respond to the obstruction to the freedom of movement of its personnel or of the humanitarian convoys. In that context, it also decided that “Member States...may take, under the authority of the Security Council and subject to close coordination with the Secretary-General and UNPROFOR, all necessary measures, through the use of air power... to support UNPROFOR in the performance of its mandate.” On that basis, NATO’s “Close air support” operation was decided at the Athens Atlantic Council of June 10, 1993 and launched beginning in late July.

The character of the international response changed most sharply when the Atlantic alliance was itself the proponent of specific operations. Such was the case of threats of air strikes in August 1993, of the ultimata and the establishment of “exclusion zones” around Sarajevo and Gorazde, and finally of the air strikes conducted in response to the attack against Bihac in late 1994. Such initiatives followed requests of the UN Secretary General or authorization by the Security Council. However, even more clearly than when NATO played a supporting role of UN operations, in these cases the allied intervention was directed against one of the parties in conflict and weighted in the balance of forces among them.

PEACEKEEPING ON THE GROUND, PEACE-ENFORCEMENT FROM THE AIR

More than in other multilateral interventions in regional crises, the response to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina has brought to the fore the possible contrast between UN-managed operations on the ground and concurrent broader initiatives of the Security Council—between the attempt to carry out a humanitarian operation on the ground while peace-enforcement comes from the air. And, more generally, the fundamental lesson of former Yugoslavia may reside in the outright contradiction that emerges in complex operations carried out under the UN banner and implying the application of increasing—but still limited—levels of force.

Consent and coercion cannot be mixed. The humanitarian operation on the ground needs the consent of the warring parties to be carried out, and that consent tends to be taken away by the party that becomes the target of other initiatives of the Security Council or of NATO itself. Indeed the operation on the ground may become—as it became in Bosnia-Herzegovina—a hostage in the hands of those trying to defend themselves from attacks from outside.

To the UN authorities in charge of the operation on the ground, threatening or resorting to the air strikes was, at most, one of the instruments

they had at their disposal in a difficult, unceasing negotiation mostly with the Bosnian Serbs aimed at gaining their assent, case by case, to specific humanitarian initiatives (the general reference framework of the London Conference was never effective).

To those using coercive force, that is to the NATO authorities, basic conditions for their involvement were consistency and credibility. That was stressed on a number of occasions by NATO Secretary General Woerner. Credibility needed to be maintained if the Alliance's participation in the Bosnian operations was to be effective.²² And force, as already mentioned, in many cases was used in the attempt to influence the evolution of the conflict itself, or as a way to control the violence. The two positions were moving from different premises. The quarrel that in fact ensued between the UN and NATO about when to intervene (and the consequent blaming of each other for ineffective action) was, to a large extent, unavoidable.

Significantly, there were fewer problems in those operations in which the implementation—and the decision on when to act—was left entirely in the hands of NATO. Both “Deny Flight” and the Adriatic Sea operations could be considered cases of UN “subcontracting” to the Atlantic allies. Much more complex, instead, and beset with the difficulties indicated above, were those combined operations where NATO air power was used both to protect UNPROFOR personnel and to respond to violations of UN decisions and NATO ultimata. The problems here were threefold: who gives the order to attack, how and how expeditiously the order reaches those who carry it out, and the problem of consistency and credibility, that is of consistently carrying out punishment in case of violation. Leaving aside some technical problems related to the transmission of information and command, those problems were in fact all related to one: the decision of when to strike. This is the

issue on which the two organizations tended to diverge.

CONCLUSIONS

The international interventions in Somalia and in former Yugoslavia differ in many respects—but also point to the same problem related to the decision to use considerable amounts of force, but still not overwhelming force. The mix of operations under conditions of consent and of coercion is simply impossible.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the use of force—and NATO's participation—introduced its own logic and requirements in the international response to the conflict, while, as already noted, the United Nations strived to keep the use of force subordinated to the operation and needs on the ground. The UN authorities in Bosnia were abundantly criticized for their reluctance to make use of NATO's might. It is hard however not to be sensitive to their plight. “Bombing is a last resort—declared UNPROFOR commander General Rose in an interview in the *New York Times* at the end of September—because then you cross the Mogadishu line.... If somebody wants to fight a war here on moral or political grounds, fine, great—but count us out. Hitting one tank is peacekeeping. Hitting infrastructure, command and control, logistics, that is war, and I am not going to fight a war in white painted tanks.”²³

After the European Community failed to find a contextual solution to the different and interconnected aspects of the Yugoslav conflict in late 1991, the international community has never had an overall strategy for dealing with the issue—a strategy that would go beyond the humanitarian operation and a stopgap response to some particular developments there. In this condition the use of force tended to become a substitute for policy. In addition, among other effects, the coercive use of military power establishes its own standards for assessing effective-

²² *Nouvelles Atlantiques*, vol. 28, no. 2602, 2 March 1994, pp. 1–2).

²³ Roger Cohen, “U.N. General Opposes More Bosnia Force,” *New York Times*, 29 September 1994.

ness and raises expectations concerning the possibility of solving the conflict.

In former Yugoslavia, the UN built the most complex operation and suffered the heaviest casualties of its history. It also came increasingly under criticism for what many saw as indecision and the limited results of its action. Still, NATO can only be used as what it is: an instrument to a policy. The UN cannot pacify Bosnia-Herzegovina. It cannot even adequately perform its limited mission if other capabilities—especially political and economic—are not brought back in large scale to deal with this extremely complex crisis.

Despite frequent changes by columnists, academics and politicians, the issue is not a technical one—of incompetence of the United Nations or of other international organizations. Rather, it is a problem of tasks—too broad for their capabilities—we have laid on the steps of those organizations. The Western influential countries are counting on international organizations as never before in the postwar history. However, unfortu-

nately, they are treating those organizations as independent international actors, as if they had a political will of their own, as if they had capabilities and resources independent of them.

The point is that, for all the improvement we have introduced in the working of those organizations, there remains an enormous gap between the power structures that regulated the international system during the Cold War and those multilateral mechanisms we are relying on today for dealing with issues of international stability. Thus, most important is to realize that the main problem we have facing us today in dealing with sources on international instability, is a political problem—not a technical one. Because of that political problem that they cannot possibly control, international organizations often find themselves in serious difficulties. The history of the Western response to the Somali and Yugoslav crises—and in particular of the combined use of the United Nations' and others' capabilities—is most indicative in this respect.