
Security-Related Assistance for Promoting Peace: U.N. Peacekeeping and Related Activities

Despite the wariness over United Nations operations that has developed recently, addressing conflict through multilateral approaches can, in some cases, make the unilateral introduction of U.S. military forces less likely. U.N. peacekeeping remains a way of ensuring that other countries will share in the financial, political, and human costs of efforts to keep the peace.

More broadly, trying to keep the peace and promoting international law and order may have important implications for the type of world in which the United States finds itself in the 21st century. Political volatility and armed conflict in other regions of the world could have serious consequences for U.S. interests, especially given the growing prevalence of terrorism and the increasing abilities of extremists to gain access to highly destructive weaponry. Even though the United States is unlikely to be vulnerable to invasion or large-scale attacks from smaller powers, extensive harm could be caused to U.S. citizens and interests at home and abroad. U.N. peacekeeping and peace enforcement activities--if sufficiently funded and otherwise supported by the international community--may provide a mechanism by which the United States can influence the course of such conflicts without making the extensive commitments implied by unilateral intervention.

U.N. peacekeeping operations, dating back to the first years of the United Nations, are authorized by resolutions of the Security Council and administered through the office of the Secretary General. They are financed on a mission-by-mission basis by the United Nations' member states, according to a special scale of assessments. But they often also

depend on direct assistance from the militaries of certain member states including the United States.

Historically, U.N. peacekeepers have acted as deterrents against renewed conflict, as a reassuring presence to help build confidence while institutions are repaired and elections held, and as symbols of international commitment. They have generally played the role of monitors more than of soldiers, manning border outposts, conducting aerial reconnaissance, arranging cease-fires, and the like. Through the 1980s their numbers were generally modest, averaging several thousand at a time worldwide.

Peacekeepers, also known as "blue berets" or "blue helmets," have operated under strict constraints on how they may use force. They generally have been allowed to fire weapons only in self-defense, and in some cases have not even been armed. Their equipment has generally been fairly light and simple, though it has included reconnaissance aircraft as well.¹

More than 30 "blue helmet" peacekeeping operations have been instituted over the lifetime of the United Nations. About 1,000 U.N. personnel have died in the line of service over this period, including more than 200 in the past two years, and about \$10 billion has been spent--roughly half of it in the past two years. As of February 1994, 16 U.N.

1. Michael Krepon and Peter D. Constable, *Confidence-Building, Peace-Making and Aerial Inspections in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 1992).

peacekeeping operations of varying size and scope were in effect. They involved a total of more than 70,000 troops from many countries.²

A fairly clear distinction can be made between large and small current missions. Four--in Bosnia, Somalia, Mozambique, and Lebanon--each involve from 5,000 to 31,000 U.N. personnel and have average annual costs ranging from \$150 million to \$1.2 billion. With the exception of an intermediate-size mission authorized in October 1993 for Rwanda, each of the others has no more than 1,200 personnel and costs \$75 million or less a year. The smaller operations include long-standing monitoring activities along the Indo-Pakistani border, on several Arab-Israeli borders, and in Cyprus. They also include new and relatively small missions along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border and in the Western Sahara, El Salvador, and Angola.³ (Table 8 shows the location, duration, and personnel associated with each of these missions.)

U.N. peacekeeping missions increasingly entail combat--as witnessed especially in Somalia, but also in Bosnia and, until recently, in Cambodia. In addition, these missions involve a growing number of individuals in civilian or police roles.⁴ Other new activities have included running or monitoring elections (for example, in Namibia, Angola, and Cambodia), monitoring the disarmament of combatants (El Salvador, Namibia, and Somalia), eliminating land mines (Somalia and Cambodia), acting as temporary administrators of government functions in extreme cases (Cambodia), and helping to build up basic institutions such as police forces (El Salvador and Cambodia).⁵

2. United Nations Department of Public Information, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, March 1994," Background Note (UNDPI, New York, March 1994).

3. William J. Durch and Barry M. Blechman, *Keeping the Peace: The United Nations in the Emerging World Order* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 1992), pp. 11, 14.

4. Independent Advisory Group on U.N. Financing, *Financing an Effective United Nations* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1993), p. 14.

5. For a discussion of the severity of this problem, see Senator Patrick Leahy, "Landmine Moratorium: A Strategy for Stronger International Limits," *Arms Control Today* (January/February 1993), pp. 11-14.

Indeed, in the important case of Somalia, a U.N. military mission took on such an active role in trying to impose a certain type of peace that the terms peace enforcement and civil reconstruction better capture the reality of the operation. In the past, force was used only for a different class of multilateral security operations--those collective actions taking place with U.N. approval but outside the control of the Secretary General, notably the U.S.-led operations to defend South Korea and to liberate Kuwait.

Although the United Nations generally has avoided participation in combat activities in Bosnia, the U.N. presence there has been doing something other than monitoring a peace. It has participated in an armed humanitarian relief operation.

Both Bosnia and Somalia illustrate the complexity of new approaches to U.N. security operations. Although not as notably successful as the operation in Cambodia appears to have been, the humanitarian missions in those countries--made possible by the presence of troops--have mitigated the human suffering considerably. But despite large expenditures of human and financial resources, the U.N. missions might be seen as having failed in important ways. As discussed below, the ultimate verdict on them undoubtedly will color future U.N. operations.

Budgeting for Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping operations have become costly by comparison with historical averages and consume a growing fraction of the total U.N. budget. The world community spent about \$1.4 billion on peacekeeping in 1992 and about \$3 billion in the course of 1993.⁶

Over the past three years, the United States has budgeted an average of nearly half a billion dollars a year for U.N. peacekeeping assessments. That level significantly exceeds the typical U.S. contribution of about \$150 million a year in the 1980s (see Figure 3). The 1994 appropriation of about \$500

6. Independent Advisory Group, *Financing an Effective United Nations*, p. 14.

million was enough to pay most of the outstanding U.S. obligations, since fiscal year 1994 funds were used to pay bills that came due in 1993. But a number of assessments early in calendar year 1994

could put the United States nearly \$1 billion in arrears unless more money is appropriated for peacekeeping. (See Appendix C for one idea on how to solve this problem.)

Table 8.
Current Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations

Abbreviation	Name	Inception	Approximate Annual Cost (Millions of dollars)	Strength as of February 1994	Fatalities
UNTSO	U.N. Truce Supervision Organization	June 1948	30	221	28
UNMOGIP	U.N. Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	January 1949	8	39	6
UNFICYP	U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	March 1964	47	1,235	163
UNDOF	U.N. Disengagement Observer Force	June 1974	32	1,048	35
UNIFIL	U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon	March 1978	145	5,216	195
UNIKOM	U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission	April 1991	73	1,187	1
UNAVEM II	U.N. Angola Verification Mission II	June 1991	25	81	3
ONUSAL	U.N. Observer Mission in El Salvador	July 1991	24	310	2
MINURSO	U.N. Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	September 1991	40	336	3
UNPROFOR	U.N. Protection Force (former Yugoslavia)	March 1992	1,245	30,500	77
ONUMOZ	U.N. Operation in Mozambique	December 1992	329	6,754	10
UNOSOM II	U.N. Operation in Somalia II	May 1993	1,000	22,289	100
UNOMUR	U.N. Observer Mission in Uganda-Rwanda	June 1993	a	75	0
UNOMIG	U.N. Observer Mission in Georgia	August 1993	7	20	0
UNOMIL	U.N. Observer Mission in Liberia	September 1993	70	374	0
UNAMIR	U.N. Assistance Mission for Rwanda	October 1993	98	2,131	0

SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office based on data from the United Nations.

NOTES: Although a U.N. mission in Haiti was authorized in September 1993, it is not included in this table because it has not been sent.

The estimates of annual costs are valid as of January 31, 1994, and fatality figures are valid as of March 9, 1994.

a. Costs related to the operation of UNOMUR are included in the annual cost of UNAMIR.

The United States has paid other costs related to U.N. peacekeeping that are not reflected in the above figure. The U.S. contribution to the U.N. operation in Somalia is a telling example. Before the U.N. operation officially began, costly U.S. unilateral activities led the Pentagon to seek and receive a \$700 million supplemental appropriation from the Congress for 1993. After the operation in Somalia was shifted to the United Nations, the United States contributed troops and logistics support paid by the Department of Defense out of its normal accounts and was only partially reimbursed by U.N. peacekeeping funds. (The standard U.N. rate averaging roughly \$1,000 per soldier per month is not nearly sufficient to cover all costs because U.S. troops are expensive by comparison with the global average.)

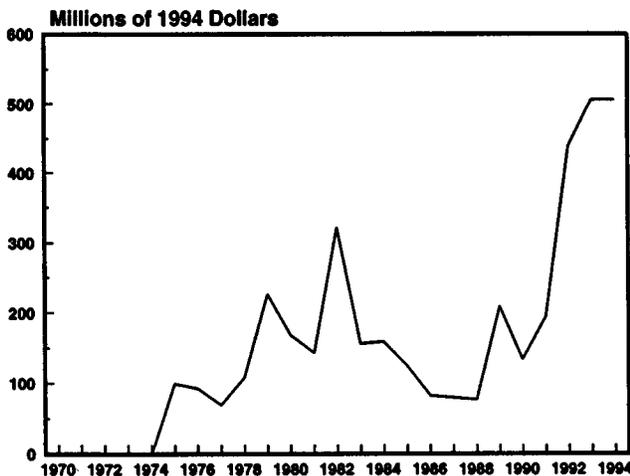
Some U.N. peacekeeping operations may have room for economies. But trying to skimp on resources can be dangerous. Seven thousand U.N. personnel helped put in place a peace agreement and oversaw elections in the small country of Nami-

bia. However, when the United Nations tried to make do with a more limited mandate of simply observing elections in Angola with only 400 observers, its mission failed and combatants were able to flout election results and world opinion.⁷ The recent success of the United Nations in promoting peace and democratic elections in Cambodia was in part the result of the large U.N. contingent overseeing the details of a plan approved in advance by all major political and military elements in Cambodia and supported by the U.N. Security Council throughout its duration.⁸

Illustrative Costs of Additional U.S. Support

After considering the advantages and disadvantages of peacekeeping, and evaluating the success of operations that remain under way today, the United States may decide that it is in its security interests to become more supportive of this instrument of policy. Along with other donors, it may also decide to assist countries that are harmed by U.N.-imposed sanctions that might be part of an overall U.N. security operation against their neighbors.

Figure 3.
U.S. Spending for U.N. Peacekeeping Assessments, 1970-1994



SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office based on data from the Office of Management and Budget.

NOTE: This figure includes only payments from the U.S. government to the United Nations; it does not include the costs of Department of Defense support for official U.N. peacekeeping operations.

Support for Traditional U.N. Peacekeeping

Divining future U.N. peacekeeping costs with much certainty is quite simply impossible. Such costs depend on the number of future conflicts and the frequency with which the world community determines that it should play a role in trying to end those conflicts. Nevertheless, recent budgetary his-

7. Independent Advisory Group, *Financing an Effective United Nations*, p. 15.

8. This accomplishment is noteworthy given the ruthlessness of the Khmer Rouge and other parties to those elections. For a discussion of how the United Nations kept the Hun Sen government honest during and after elections, see Mary Kay Magistad, "Cambodian Rulers Cited in Anti-Voting Violence," *The Washington Post*, June 10, 1993, p. A29; General Accounting Office, *U.N. Peacekeeping: Lessons Learned in Managing Recent Missions* (December 1993), pp. 58-59.

tory provides some benchmarks. In 1993, the United Nations spent about \$3 billion on peacekeeping operations. Sustaining this level of funding would permit the current tempo and scale of operations to continue, provided that unreimbursed help from the militaries of countries contributing troops and supplies remains forthcoming.

Nevertheless, annual funding would have to be even higher for the tempo of mid-1993, when large operations in Bosnia, Somalia, and Cambodia were under way simultaneously. Indeed, the average annual cost of active U.N. missions at that time was \$4.2 billion. This figure corresponds to the hypothetical cost for a given 12-month period if the missions that were going on at that time continued throughout the period.

An Estimate of Future U.N. Peacekeeping Costs. Thus, for illustrative purposes, this study assumes that future annual U.N. peacekeeping costs are likely to be between \$3 billion and \$4.2 billion. The study also assumes that the U.S. financial contribution to official U.N. peacekeeping costs remains at the recent level of about 30 percent of total funding (though a later section of this chapter discusses the idea of reducing the U.S. assessment to 25 percent). Under these assumptions, the United States' contribution would be about \$900 million to \$1.3 billion a year--some \$400 million to \$800 million a year more than it budgeted for 1994. If the Congress chooses to appropriate even more the first couple of years in order to eliminate arrears, a 10-year average annual increase might reach \$500 million to \$900 million over the 1994 level (see Table 9).

Actual U.N. peacekeeping and associated U.S. costs could of course be substantially higher or lower. But the illustrative level of \$3 billion to \$4.2 billion is not inconsistent with recent history and the current status of world conflicts. In the past, U.N. peacekeeping costs have been much smaller--typically hundreds of millions of dollars a year or less. But those lower costs reflect the Cold War paralysis that prevented U.N. involvement.

Further Rationale for the Estimate. Today, a number of conflicts, given their potential for creat-

Table 9.
U.S. Costs of Illustrative Aid Initiative
for U.N. Peacekeeping and Related Activities
(In millions of 1994 dollars)

Category of Aid	Average Annual Increases
Traditional Peacekeeping Operations	500 to 900
Sanctions Relief Fund	Up to a few hundred
Total	Up to 1,500

SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office.

NOTE: These numbers assume that the United States would continue to pay about 30 percent of U.N. peacekeeping costs.

ing flows of refugees and otherwise causing international concern, remain possible subjects of future U.N. attention.⁹ Serious conflicts are being waged in Angola, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka, Liberia, Rwanda, and Sudan; smaller wars or civil unrest can be found in a number of countries including Georgia, Peru, Zaire, Burundi, and Burma. Others could erupt, too. As Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali points out, some 100 significant conflicts around the world have caused 20 million deaths since 1945, but political polarization on the Security Council led to 279 vetoes of proposals for multilateral action to deal with many of them.¹⁰ If one simply extrapolates from the above figure of 100 conflicts since 1945, some 20 might well be expected to break out over the next 10 years and cause several million deaths.

9. Independent Advisory Group, *Financing an Effective United Nations*, p. 15; Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992: Report Submitted to the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives* (February 1993).

10. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (New York: United Nations, 1992), p. 7.

How frequently, and under what circumstances, will the United Nations become involved in such operations? Presumably, its list of criteria for deciding will include the magnitude of the stakes at issue in a given conflict as measured in political or humanitarian terms, the feasibility of getting major U.N. Security Council members to work cooperatively in search of a solution, and the willingness of the United States and other countries to risk the lives of their troops in any mission. Finally, criteria for intervention must include what might be termed the "Clausewitz test"--the question of whether the actual military tools at the United Nations' disposal can succeed in accomplishing desired political objectives and in a reasonably short time. President Clinton voiced similar criteria for decisionmaking in a major speech at the United Nations in September 1993.¹¹

If the United Nations responds to even half of the conflicts likely to be taking place during the remainder of this decade, 10 new substantial missions could conceivably evolve over that period. Such a number, though large, would hardly be surprising considering the fact that the United Nations started five missions in 1992 and again in 1993.¹²

Although today's more than 70,000 peacekeepers are numerous by historical standards, their forces pale in comparison with the more than 20 million individuals under arms in national armies worldwide and are not unreasonably large for an organization with serious security responsibilities.

Cushioning the Effects of Sanctions on Innocent Countries

Peacekeeping costs might also rise if the United Nations undertook to cushion the economic effects of actions such as sanctions and blockades on certain countries. Compensation could enhance the

prospects for cooperation from countries that would be significantly hurt economically if they lost a major trading partner and that might need technical assistance of some type to be capable of stopping illicit flows of goods across their borders.

Recognizing these realities, the Secretary General has called on member states to investigate ways of aiding countries that through no fault of their own are hurt by sanctions.¹³ The United Nations might not use the official peacekeeping budget to mitigate such economic disruptions, but the costs clearly would be related to peacekeeping.

That type of cost is not theoretical. For example, according to the small countries bordering Yugoslavia, U.N. sanctions against Serbia--including a blockade by European and U.S. navies--have caused them significant economic harm.¹⁴

To induce compliance with sanctions--often a preferred alternative to war--the United Nations may therefore decide to mitigate the pain caused to particular countries by officially imposed sanctions. How much might such relief cost?

Take a medium-sized, middle-income country with a gross domestic product on the order of \$100 billion, of which \$25 billion involves foreign trade. The costs of sanctions are not this full amount, though, but rather the substitution costs and transition costs of finding alternative markets. These markets are not always easily found; many times, barter arrangements cannot be easily replaced, informal distribution networks cannot adapt quickly, and transportation costs for alternative routes can be quite large. Although it is difficult to be specific, net costs to the neighbors of a country under sanctions could reach several billion dollars a year--especially if these neighboring countries are also being asked to tighten up their customs enforcement at borders.

If the United Nations was to cushion these types of losses substantially--without alleviating them

11. Address of President Bill Clinton before the United Nations General Assembly, September 27, 1993.

12. Independent Advisory Group, *Financing an Effective United Nations*, p. 16.

13. Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, p. 24.

14. General Accounting Office, *Serbia-Montenegro: Implementation of U.N. Economic Sanctions* (April 1993), p. 9.

entirely--annual funding on the order of hundreds of millions or even more than a billion dollars might be needed. Assuming that the United States would pay 30 percent of these costs and that one to two such operations might be conducted at a time, Washington might wind up contributing as much as several hundred million dollars a year.

Why U.S. Costs of U.N. Peacekeeping Might Be Less

This study's range of \$3 billion to \$4.2 billion for annual U.N. peacekeeping costs, and the associated U.S. contributions, illustrate levels of future funding consistent with sustaining current levels of operations. Actual requirements for funds could be smaller because of a variety of military and political factors and policy decisions.

U.S. Share of Costs Could Be Reduced

Currently, the United States is committed to paying 31.7 percent of U.N. peacekeeping costs but only 25 percent of other U.N. costs. The other four permanent members of the U.N. Security Council also pay shares of total costs that are somewhat higher than their shares of aggregate world GDP. Because U.N. missions have sometimes been seen as serving their purposes, and because of the veto right they enjoy as permanent members of the Security Council, it seemed appropriate that they make disproportionately large contributions. But as the attentions of the Security Council have shifted toward other parts of the world, some people argue that all countries should make proportionate contributions to activities that benefit all of them. In addition, because the United States already does a great deal for international security as the international law enforcer of last resort, it arguably owes the world no disproportionate contributions to U.N. security activities (see Table 2 on page 8).

Thus, Washington could lobby the United Nations to reduce the scale of assessments for U.N. peacekeeping. President Clinton made such a pro-

posal in his September 1993 U.N. speech, and the Congress included language in its 1994 funding for U.N. peacekeeping suggesting a rate of 25 percent.

Peacekeeping Operations Could Be Undertaken More Selectively

The jury remains out on the circumstances under which U.N. peacekeeping operations can work effectively. If those operations are ineffective, or seem thus, peacekeeping activities may be authorized less frequently than in 1993, and costs could decline.

The recent record of U.N. operations contains a good deal of encouraging news, but achievements are still notably mixed. Success in Namibia is countered by failure in Angola; a generally positive movement in El Salvador stands in contrast to the aborted mission in Haiti. The recently completed Cambodia mission, despite its various problems and shortcomings, contributed to what seems a monumental event in the history of the Cambodian people--the apparently effective ostracizing of the Khmer Rouge, and the reconciliation of political groups and armies that had been at odds for decades. However, success in Cambodia stands in stark contrast to what became a frustrating and bloody search for warlord General Aidid in Somalia, and an inability to end conflicts both there and in Bosnia--though the scale of human suffering probably has been mitigated by U.N.-protected food distribution in both cases.

In addition, peacekeeping missions can suffer from disputed military chains of command, as in the case of the mission in Somalia. Perhaps even more important, they can suffer from a lack of political decisiveness and accountability.

The future of U.N. military operations seems especially open to debate and doubt in situations for which a credible truce does not yet exist--and thus the term "peacekeeping" is probably a misnomer--as in the cases of Somalia and Bosnia. Member states have not yet decided when, or whether, they are willing to spill their citizens' blood to settle ethnic, nationalist, or personal wars that they may poorly

understand and have little immediate stake in.¹⁵ These problems may prove the undoing of serious efforts at collective security.

Reflecting such concerns, the Congress recently mandated the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Somalia by the end of March 1994. The U.S. representative to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, called for better advance estimates of the costs of peacekeeping operations, and automatic termination dates for certain types of missions. On September 27, 1993, President Clinton gave a major speech to the U.N. General Assembly in which he reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to peacekeeping but also called for more discrimination in how missions are authorized and carried out. Shortly thereafter, the other four permanent members of the Security Council joined the United States in issuing a statement to the same effect.

Some discretion in initiating and conducting U.N. security missions is undoubtedly prudent, especially as the potential scope for U.N. missions expands dramatically. As former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft recently said, "When the international community acts, especially these days when its enhanced authority is getting established, it is critical that each test of strength be successful. Success will breed success and deter aggression that might otherwise take place."¹⁶

Yet how does the world community draw a clear line? Deploying forces only when their missions would be sure to succeed without substantial casualties, or placing strict time limits on the durations of missions, could weaken the effectiveness of deterrence. Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger voiced this concern not long ago in reaction to President Clinton's newly unveiled policy toward peacekeeping.¹⁷ In Eagleburger's view, a policy that attempted to set precise limits on missions could embolden aggressors. They might try to

intimidate the world community into inaction or military withdrawal. Arguably, the Serbs in Bosnia and General Aidid in Somalia have operated on such premises. Should their approach prove successful, peacekeeping may become less common.

U.N. Diplomacy Could Become More Effective

A more activist and prevention-minded United Nations may prevent some conflicts and thus reduce peacekeeping costs. It could monitor regional trouble spots and try to mediate conflicts--through the offices of the Secretary General or the World Court or a similar organization--before they enter cycles of violence. For example, under such an approach, the World Court might consider contested borders--even those in places such as the former Yugoslavia and Ukraine--with the world community committed to supporting the Court's verdicts through appropriate types of carrots and sticks. In certain special cases, such as Macedonia, military forces might be deployed preventively as political tensions mounted rather than after they had exploded.

Consider the former Yugoslavia. It might have been easier to keep a lid on that conflict had a framework for redrawing borders been set up in an official manner early, with U.N. forces pledged to support it. Insisting on guarantees of minority rights as a precondition for diplomatic recognition, or a willingness to change borders that never had real legitimacy, were two such possibilities. Such an idea was discussed among Muslims, Croats, and Serbs but did not receive the active backing of the international community.¹⁸

These approaches could reduce the incidence and intensity of conflict. However, where mediation failed, multilateral military responses might be more likely than they are today. Once the world community had made serious efforts to prevent conflict, and had reached conclusions about what a

15. See Bob Dole, "Peacekeepers and Politics," *The New York Times*, January 24, 1994, p. A15.

16. Brent Scowcroft, "Who Can Harness History? Only the U.S.," *The New York Times*, July 2, 1993, p. A15.

17. Thomas L. Friedman, "Theory vs. Practice," *The New York Times*, October 1, 1993, p. A2.

18. Don Oberdorfer, "A Bloody Failure in the Balkans," *The Washington Post*, February 8, 1993, p. A1; David Binder, "U.S. Policy-makers on Bosnia Admit Errors in Opposing Partition in 1992," *The New York Times*, August 29, 1993, p. A10.

fair settlement might be, it might feel committed to "do something" even if the parties to a conflict proved unable to negotiate peace. More aggressive use of diplomacy would stand in contrast to the current system, in which countries such as Sudan and Liberia have not received consistent high-level political attention and the goal of a fair peace in Bosnia has often been pursued rather weakly. Thus, on balance it is not clear that a more activist diplomacy ultimately would have the effect of reducing the scale of U.N. military intervention globally.

War Could Become Less Common

Today's high incidence of war stems in part from the breakup of the Soviet empire and Yugoslavia, as well as the enduring effects of the Cold War. Such conflicts could decline on their own, thereby diminishing the need for added U.S. financial contributions and frequent U.S. military roles in U.N. missions.

However, again there are caveats. Many foreign policy analysts are not sanguine on this point and consider war endemic to today's world.¹⁹ In support of their argument, they can point to much of the history of the 20th century, in which conflict has continued even as empires were created and then lost, and world wars waged and ended.

Why Costs Might Be Higher

Costs associated with U.N. peacekeeping could also be higher than the range of \$3 billion to \$4.2 billion a year estimated above. Missions simply could be longer or more numerous than expected, and one or two individual missions might also be of a larger scale and of a militarily much more challenging nature than expected.

Greater Confidence About Peacekeeping Missions

If the United Nations becomes more effective at peacekeeping operations, it may be turned to even more frequently. The success rate of initial large-scale operations, whatever it may prove to be, probably can be improved by learning lessons from past successes and mistakes.

Indeed, lessons are being learned already. For example, in contrast to the small and apparently failed U.N. role in building a peace in Angola, the U.N. operation in Mozambique will not proceed to elections directly. First, it will focus on demobilizing and disarming soldiers, as well as forming and training a new "national unity" military and police.

Tragic events in Somalia underscore that the United Nations and its member states have yet to learn a number of important lessons. But the successful mission in Cambodia may provide a model for improvement. The key ingredients of success in Cambodia--a clear and commonly accepted timetable for disarmament and elections, and political figures of national stature--were not present in Somalia. If they figure more prominently in future operations, the prospects for success could improve substantially.

More Large Missions?

U.N. peacekeeping costs could rise quickly if one or two missions of a militarily more demanding nature were undertaken. Indeed, the large and ambitious missions in Cambodia, Bosnia, and Somalia drove annual peacekeeping costs to their record level in 1993. Should even more such operations take place in the future, or should their magnitude increase further, one could expect costs to rise.

A large-scale Bosnian effort could substantially increase the global number of U.N. peacekeepers and associated costs. During his confirmation hearings for the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili estimated that 50,000 troops from the North Atlantic Treaty

19. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Post-Communist Nationalism," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1989/90), pp. 1-25; see also John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* (Summer 1990), pp. 5-56.

Organization and \$4 billion in expenditures for the first year might be needed to monitor a comprehensive peace accord there.²⁰ The United States might provide up to half of those troops.

With large and more assertive operations being undertaken, moreover, even larger forces than expected might be needed. When hostilities occur or seem likely to occur, military planners generally prefer an extra margin of insurance, and initial estimates are often revised upward.

More Reimbursement by the United Nations to Member States?

The member states of the United Nations may also decide at some point to cover all the costs of countries participating in U.N. operations. This idea has been proposed by William Durch and Barry Blechman of the Henry Stimson Center.²¹

Currently, the United Nations provides only a fixed amount per person per month to countries contributing peacekeeping troops--whether or not that amount suffices for the troops and operation at issue. For the United States, it generally does not.

20. Eric Schmitt, "President's Nominee As Head of Military Backs Bosnia Force," *The New York Times*, September 23, 1993, p. A1.

21. Durch and Blechman, *Keeping the Peace*, p. 94.

For example, the Congress recently provided the Department of Defense with a 1994 supplemental appropriation of \$1.2 billion to cover costs associated with U.N.-sponsored operations in Somalia, Bosnia, Iraq, and Haiti.

Using this type of accounting scheme would not directly change the true costs of peacekeeping. But it would have the effects of distributing the burdens now often placed on countries contributing troops and of substantially increasing the official U.N. costs of its peacekeeping operations. On balance, it could either increase or decrease net costs to the United States.

Such a scheme could also allow for a fuller and more timely reimbursement to countries providing equipment and logistics support. For example, the Department of Defense has submitted bills for several tens of millions of dollars of equipment and logistics services provided in Somalia and Cambodia, of which a substantial share had not been reimbursed by the United Nations as of February 1994.

In sum, the official costs of U.N. peacekeeping operations could exceed those assumed in this study for a number of plausible reasons. But there are also reasons to believe the spending could be lower. The range of \$3 billion to \$4.2 billion provides one illustration of possible future peacekeeping costs and their effects on the U.S. budget.