

Saving the World from the "Scourge of War" - Critical Evaluation of the United Nations' Aims in Respect to World Peace and Security

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Introduction

In the great uncertainties and disorders that lie ahead, the UN, for all its shortcomings, will be called on again and again, because there is no other global institution, because there is a severe limit to what even the strongest powers wish to take on themselves... Either the UN is vital to a more stable and equitable world and should be given the means to do its job, or peoples and governments should be encouraged to look elsewhere. But is there really an alternative? (Urquhart, 1994, as quoted in Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 536)

What is the real power of the United Nations? Can the organization make any decisions on its own or is it fully dependent on its members, and particularly the five permanent members of the Security Council? Can the UN prevent conflicts and maintain world peace? Does the UN need reforms?

This research paper will critically evaluate the United Nations organization and measure its aims stated in the UN Charter in respect to world peace and security. The goal of the paper is to show that the majority of the UN's aims could never be realized due to the realist approach to international relations used by its member states. The paper will also show that, without appropriate reforms, the UN may lose its relevance and end up like its predecessor, the League of Nations.

The first part of the paper will present realist, liberalist, and idealist theories of international relations. The second part will examine the aims of the United Nations in respect to world peace and security. The third part of the paper will discuss recent UN troubles. The fourth part of the paper will discuss the need and prospects for the reform of the UN.

Theories of International Relations

This part of the paper will examine the most important theories of international

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relations: realism, liberalism, and idealism.

Realism

Realism, or Realpolitik, is the oldest and most used theory of international relations (Donnelly, 2005: 29), both in academic circles and as an approach used by governments in foreign relations (Hough, 2004: 2; Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 25). Hough (2004: 22) argues that the realist theory of powerful and wary states started out by taking into account devastating "scale and nature of the major wars in history."

Realists focus on the role of state power, self-interest, force, diplomacy, national security, and balance of power. The main form of power in their view is military power (Crawford, 2000: 72; Kolodziej, 2005: 129). Neo-realism, one of the realist schools of thought, maintains that military is not the only source of power. They argue that states may also become powerful focusing on their economic performances or possessing a key natural resource (Hough, 2004: 4).

The modern world is divided into sovereign states, each using force to protect its borders and keep law and order on its territory. "The system of sovereign states is sustained against overthrow by the balance of power" (George, 1994: 72). State sovereignty, protected under the international law, gives "the freedom and responsibility [to the leaders of states] to do whatever is necessary to advance the state's interests and survival" (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 22) The modern state sovereignty dates back to the Westphalian settlement of 1648 (Riggs and Plano, 1988: 1; Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 22).

Realism considers the state as the key factor in international relations (Kolodziej, 2005: 128; Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 22). For realists, states are "unitary and rational actors, whose interactions with other states are of primary interest, and tend to be conflictual because they occur under anarchic conditions" (George, 1994: 72; Crawford, 2000: 5; Mowle, 2003: 566). The notion of anarchy comes from the fact that there is no international government to rule over relations among states (Donnelly, 2005: 30; Mearsheimer, 1995: 337).

Political realism is a "doctrine of skepticism" (Crawford, 2000: 73). States act not according to the moral and legal principles, but by considerations of power and national interest (Donnelly, 2005: 48). States pursue their national interest "even if this conflicts with the interests of other states and peoples" (Hough, 2004: 3). Realists stress the fact that powerful states often get away with violating moral norms, and that when they are not able to do so, it is "because the power of other states has been mobilized on behalf of the moral norm" (Donnelly, 2005: 49). Realists view international relations as a "zero-sum struggle for power, and peace as the fragile outcome of mutual insecurity and existential deterrence" (Griffiths, 1992: 141; George, 1994: 72).

Realists believe that, in order to stay competitive and survive in a violent world, states must continuously invest in development of their military forces, weaponry, and alliances (Kolodziej, 2005: 130). For realists, alliances are only means to an end; they are "conditional on changing circumstances and the rapport of force among states" (Kolodziej, 2005: 133; Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 23). Realists do not want to end conflict; they only want to be able to manage it and come out of it as winners (Donnelly, 2005: 31).

States also confront non-state actors, such as the United Nations, which are "attributed power to constrain states and to have interests in their own right" (Kolodziej, 2005: 156). Waltz (as quoted in Crawford, 2000: 103), one of the leading realist theorists, writes that international organizations such as the UN are not capable to "act in

important ways except with the support, or at least the acquiescence, of the principal states concerned with the matters at hand." Hough (2004: 3) notes that states see organizations such as the UN as mere "alliances of convenience between states." The most powerful states create international institutions to maintain or increase their share of world power. These institutions are fundamentally "arenas for acting out power relationships" (Mearsheimer, 1995: 340).

Liberalism and Idealism

This part of the paper will examine political liberalism and idealism. These two political perspectives are examined together because, as Kegley and Wittkopf (1995: 19) note, idealism is a "derivative of the much larger and longer philosophical tradition known as liberalism."

Liberalism in general emphasizes the "importance, equality, and liberty of the individual as a human agent and the need to protect people from excessive regulation by the state" (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 19). Unlike the realists' state of anarchy in the world, liberals consider peace, harmony, and cooperation as normal state of affairs (Burchill, 2005: 58). Mowle (2003: 566) notes that liberals, "rather than relying directly on power to achieve narrow self-interests, invoke norms as shortcuts to their decision problems." They believe that a peaceful world community is a possibility (Linklater, 2005; 87). Liberals think that conflict and war can be "removed from human experience" (Burchill, 2005: 58). They believe that a "democratic society, in which civil liberties are protected and market relations prevail, can have an international analogue in the form of a peaceful global order" (Burchill, 2005: 58). Mowle (2003: 567) notes that collective security would be the "ultimate expression of liberalism in which interests are defined in terms of a community norm of peaceful resolution of disputes."

One of the ways to end wars and live in peace, according to the liberal peace theory, is to have a "uniformly democratic" world. This, liberal peace thinkers believe, can have a "revolutionary impact on world politics, making international war obsolete" (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 116). Alfred Zimmern, an idealist thinker, expressed the same opinion in his writings. Collective security, according to Zimmern (as quoted in Osiander, 1998: 426), could be established only between free and democratic states forming the nucleus of a "large and important political constellation." John Gray (as quoted in Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 118) believes that "liberal morality is not a formula for coexistence among regimes that contain diversity of ways of life. So long as the world contains a diversity of regimes, it is a prescription for conflict."

Idealists believe that humans are in their nature "good" and "capable of mutual aid and collaboration." They see fighting and war as a "product of evil institutions and structural arrangements that motivate people to act selfishly and to harm others." For idealists, "war is an international problem that requires collective or multilateral rather than national efforts to control it" (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 20). Griffiths (1992: 35) writes that political idealism signifies "an attempt to simplify political reality with a view to gaining a unitary, seemingly coherent picture" of the world.

Some of the most influential idealists, such as Woodrow Wilson and Alfred Zimmern, advocated that states should abstain from the "selfish pursuit of national interests and conduct their foreign affairs with a greater emphasis on international cooperation, morality, and diplomatic openness" (Hough, 2004: 29). Zimmern (as quoted in Osiander, 1998: 427) stressed that, to function properly, international organizations need to transform "power-politics into responsibility-politics." The League of Nations was the "embodiment of the collective security principle" and international cooperation emphasized by political idealism (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 20). The idealist political theory began diminishing with the German drive for world hegemony before and during World War II (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 21).

This part of the paper has discussed the most important theories of international relations. The next part will examine the United Nations organization and measure its aims in respect to world peace.

The United Nations' Aims vs. Reality

This part of the paper will examine the United Nations organization and measure its aims stated in the UN Charter in respect to world peace and security.

The UN was formally established on 24 October 1945 (Roberts and Kingsbury, 1988: 4), after the world had experienced the second global war in the first half of the 20th century. Bearing in mind the devastation and inhumanity on a world scale, the founders' goals were to avoid the next global war (Kumalo, 2006: 32). Idealistically, the leaders of the countries who came out victorious from World War II wanted to make the future more peaceful. They realized that humans shared one world and "unless they managed their affairs prudently, they would destroy themselves" (Polman, 2004: vii).

The allies negotiated and drafted the UN Charter, organization's "basic constitutional instrument," during World War II, planning a "post-war world order." On June 26, 1945, fifty-one states that fought on the side of the allies signed the Charter and paved the way for the new international organization (Roberts and Kingsbury, 1988: 4-5). They set the mission for the UN to "maintain international peace and security and to promote friendly relations between countries" (BBC Online, 14 June 2007).

The main UN bodies are Security Council, General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and International Court of Justice. Under the UN Charter, the Security Council is "tasked with ensuring global peace and security," and can authorize use of force and impose economic sanctions. It has five permanent members (USA, Russia, China, Britain, and France) with the right of veto and ten temporary members (BBC Online, 14 June 2007). Schlesinger (2006: 320) sees the Security Council as a realist arm of the UN, a place where the five permanent members can issue decrees obligatory for all member states.

The General Assembly includes representatives of all member states and is a forum for discussion. The Assembly can issue recommendations, but has no power to enforce its decisions (BBC Online, 14 June 2007). It is seen as an idealist part of the UN by Schlesinger (2006: 320), since all members have equal votes and voices and its resolutions are "merely a moral force, not a binding one." Economic and Social Council deals with economic, social, and humanitarian activities. International Court of Justice deals with legal disputes submitted to it by the UN member states (BBC Online, 14 June 2007).

The UN Charter, "as a written constitution," provides the structure, principles, powers, and functions for the UN (Riggs and Plano, 1988: 22; Bennett, 1991: 52). For the purpose of this research, only articles of the Charter that deal with peace, conflict, collective security, and sovereignty of states will be examined below.

The Charter opens with "we the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small... and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security... and to ensure that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest" (Roberts and Kingsbury, 1988: 231).

Chapter I, Article 1, gives the purpose of the UN: "To maintain international peace and

security and to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace." Article 2 notes that all UN members "shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" (Roberts and Kingsbury, 1988: 232-233).

Simoni (1995: 157) notes that idealists and liberalists who negotiated the text of the Charter were given at least some hope that the UN and its members would work together towards collective security and peace. The Preamble and Chapter I of the Charter state that the purpose of the UN is the "avoidance of war and maintenance of peace." On the other side, the realist influence is evident from the notions of the "nation-state functioning on the basis of national sovereignty" and the ultimate power of veto by five permanent members of the Security Council (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 523). The five most powerful countries winning World War II decided to "maintain the settlement created by their victory" and keep the rest of the world in order (Howard, 1988: 33).

Principal writers of the UN Charter were "unwilling, and perhaps unable, to think in terms other than those of nationalism, sovereignty, national interest, and established patterns of international relations" (Bennett, 1991: 40). Using national sovereignty as an excuse, countries can ignore UN decisions they do not like. Powerful sovereign states have the ability to determine the spread or containment of war and conflict (Bennett, 1991: 129). With the power of veto, the "big five" at the Security Council can disregard any decision that is against their national interests (Brucan, 1988: 9; Kumalo, 2006: 34).

Due to the Cold War tensions, idealistic ideas were completely abandoned in favor of realist politics (Wohlforth, 1995: 3), "as the major powers scrambled to secure special privileges in the UN" (Kumalo, 2006: 33). In a collective security system, each state would share responsibility for the security of other states. Instead, a balance-of-power system prevailed, and each state decided to act in its own self-interest for its protection (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 522). Furthermore, during the Cold War, the UN could act against aggression around the world only if America and the Soviet Union agreed or were indifferent (Howard, 1988: 35; Pearson, 1995: 114; Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 530). Their wars were "off-limits" for the UN, unless they themselves decided to approach the Security Council for help (Kumalo, 2006: 34).

Chapter I, Article 2(7) says: "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the UN to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter..." (Roberts and Kingsbury, 1988: 233). Mohamed (2005: 813) asserts that the UN was created "against the backdrop of a massive international war, at a time when the paramount concern of the international community was conflict between states." This explains the lack of concern to interstate conflict.

Farer (1988: 100) notes that, for a long time, every rogue regime in the world hid behind Article 2(7). But even without the reform of the Charter, the UN is gradually changing its views on internal conflicts. Civil wars are now considered to be threats to international peace since refugees often get displaced to other countries, fighting moves across borders, and other countries get involved in fighting directly or indirectly (Karns, 2006: 133). Saira Mohamed (2005: 835) explains how the issue of sovereignty of the UN member states evolved over time:

International law formerly regulated conduct among states and stayed clear of a state's treatment of its own citizens. But throughout the twentieth century, the reach of the law began to encompass a wider range of state behavior, invalidating the notion that a state's actions within its borders are exempt from international law. Sovereignty is now seen as a fluid concept, one that is mitigated by the needs of preserving peace and responding to threats to international security.

The main reason for this is the shift in the conflict patterns. It has been estimated that while approximately 40 million people were killed in wars between states, more than 170 million people were killed by their own governments in the 20th century (Bellamy and Williams, 2006: 144). Knight (2005: 518) notes that in the 1990s, the majority of over 90 conflicts around the world occurred “*within* rather than *between* states.” In these conflicts, 75% of victims of about 5.5 million killed were civilians. Mahbun UI Haq (in Eller, 1999: 1), UN Development Program advisor, believes that the future conflicts will increasingly be “between people rather than states and over issues related to culture, ethnicity, or religion.”

Kofi Annan (2005), the former UN Secretary General, reminds that, when states fail to protect their citizens from persecution and mass atrocities, the international community should be ready to step in. However, in reality, the UN is not very effective and states “have little to fear concerning interference from the UN into their internal affairs” (Bennett, 1991: 56). The ongoing crisis in Darfur is a prime example. In June 2004, China, Russia, and Pakistan (then a temporary member) claimed in the Security Council that the “scale of human suffering in Darfur was insufficient to provoke serious reflection on whether Sudan was fulfilling its responsibilities to its citizens,” blocking any action (Bellamy and Williams, 2006: 150). *Appendix 1* shows how self-interests influence priorities and decision making of powerful states. While most governments believed that the violence against Burmese civilians that started in September 2007 should stop, those who could make a difference did not want to act because they have interest in protecting the status quo.

Chapter VII, Article 51, preserves the right to self-defense of the UN members: “Nothing in the present Chapter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the UN, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security” (Roberts and Kingsbury, 1988: 244).

The Charter does not talk about the UN Peacekeeping Forces. “Chapter VI^{1/2}” has emerged in response to wars and crises around the world: in Israel and neighboring countries since 1948, in India and Pakistan since 1949, and in Cyprus since 1964, to name only a few (Howard, 1988: 43-44). It goes beyond peaceful settlement discussed in Chapter VI and stops short of using force discussed in Chapter VII (Bennett, 1991: 161; Mohamed, 2005: 820). Riggs and Plano (1988: 134) note that the UN peacekeeping missions are deployed only as a buffer between the warring parties, without considering any party as an enemy.

Bertram (1995: 391) writes that, even though sovereignty of members is strongly defended in the UN Charter, “the principle is gradually being chipped away by the new generation of peacekeeping missions.” Furthermore, peacekeeping evolved over time and now encompasses peace building, which includes “*building* political conditions for a sustainable, democratic peace.” Since 1988, eighteen UN peacekeeping operations involved some peace building activity (Bertram, 1995: 388-389; Mohamed, 2005: 810). These UN missions, writes Bertram (1995: 392), intervene in internal affairs of sovereign states, “redefining the relationship between governments and their citizens and, in many cases, supporting popular legitimacy over traditional claims of state sovereignty.” The duties of the UN peacekeepers now include election monitoring and administering territories where missions are taking place (Mohamed, 2005: 818; Knight, 2005: 522). Peace-building is now seen as state-building (Mohamed, 2005: 820).

Neack (1995: 183) writes that, for idealists, UN peacekeeping exists to “protect the international peace, norms and values, even if that is in conflict with national interests.” At the same time, realists see the peacekeeping as a way for states to “do whatever they can, given their power resources, to protect and preserve their national interests” and promote international status quo (Neack, 1995: 183). Laura Neack studied the patterns

of UN peacekeeping operations to find if state participation suggests idealist or realist explanation. She examined 18 UN operations: 10 observer missions and 8 peacekeeping operations. Her study concluded that participation in the UN peacekeeping supports the realist view that the most likely participants are states seeking benefits from the status quo and aspiring 'powers' seeking to achieve gains within the status quo (Neack, 1995: 185). The study also discovered that the countries which support UN peacekeeping are at the same time some of the major producers and distributors of weapons in the world. Idealists cannot reconcile this contradiction, writes Neack (1995: 188). However, this is not inconsistent with the realist view that considers arms sales and peacekeeping as "the pursuit of national interests and increase of state's own position and power base in the world."

The UN Charter was a compromise between realists and liberals/idealists. Its goals were collective security and elimination of war on one side, and sovereignty of states on the other side. The UN record shows that the realist views prevailed. The collective security was never achieved, wars were never eliminated, while sovereignty was not respected only in the case of the weak and rogue states. Evan Luard (1988: 212-213) believes that the founders of the United Nations set excessive expectations and overly optimistic premises in the Charter:

The type of system set out in the Charter could never have come about, since it bore no relationship to the reality of international relations and state power... was it realistic to believe that member states would always be willing submissively to obey, as they undertook to do, the decisions calling on them to send their forces to the far side of the world to meet some crisis which might appear of no immediate importance to them? Would states which disagreed fundamentally on so many vital political issues really be able to form a common view on the acute political conflicts and work together to maintain peace?

If collective security is to work in practice, foreign policies of states need to be influenced by idealist and liberal theories of international relations. Each state would have to commit itself to "act in concert with other states as a party interested more in peace restoration than in other national interests" (Bennett, 1991: 131). However, Bennett (1991: 133) realistically notes that in the world we know "national goals, values, and interests compete with the demands of collective security and national security takes precedence over collective security."

Grenville-Wood (1995: 2) believes that powerful states consider the UN as nothing but a "minor instrument of foreign policy." Bertram (1995: 401) emphasizes the fact that the most powerful members of the UN often "lack the interest or the will to back rhetorical support for UN peacekeeping goals with money and troops." The Carnegie Report (1997: xli) describes the weakness of the UN system:

The features that give the UN its potential often come at a price. Its global reach often demands some sacrifice of efficiency and focus, and the UN is fully dependent on its membership for political legitimacy, operating funds, and personnel to carry out its mandates. While member states seem in broad agreement that the UN should be concerned with a wide range of issues, there is far less agreement on what exactly the organization should do. Many countries use the UN as a fig leaf and a scapegoat to blur unwanted focus, to defuse political pressure, or to dilute or evade their own responsibilities. States - again, even the most powerful - often make commitments that they fail to honor.

This part of the paper has examined the aims of the United Nations and measured them in respect to world peace and security. The next part will discuss recent UN troubles.

Recent UN Troubles

This part of the paper will discuss some of the recent UN troubles concerning peace and security around the world. After the American failure in Somalia in 1993, then US President Bill Clinton said that the Somalia mission was a "UN failure; the UN should have said No to Somalia." In an interview that followed Clinton's statement, the UN General Secretary at the time, Boutros Ghali, said that "it is not the UN which says Yes or No to anything. It is the member states. They said Yes to the mission in Somalia. The UN only organized the troops and money required for the mission" (Polman, 2004: 33). A few days after Clinton gave a speech at the UN and said that "the UN should learn to say No," the US administration requested UN's help to "restore democracy" in Haiti (Polman, 2004: 86).

US Presidential Decision Directive 25, signed by President Clinton in May 1994, specifies that, for the United States to participate in an UN peacekeeping mission, "there must be an identifiable American interest at stake" (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1995: 534). This was followed by a bill passed in the US House of Representatives, which intended to prevent American involvement in "countries where no American interests are involved" (Polman, 2004: 172).

While the UN Charter states that the purpose of the organization is the "avoidance of war and maintenance of peace" (Simoni, 1995: 157), the Charter has not provided the means to achieve such a grand goal. Bennett (1991: 5) adds that, since founding, the UN had "lacked effective or independent means for intervention to preserve peace or dictate a solution." The UN can do only what its member states decide to do (Riggs and Plano, 1988: 348; Polman, 2004: 5; Schlesinger, 2006: 321; Vanden Heuvel, 2006: 337). Member states often pass resolutions but refuse to implement or support them in practice (Tharoor, 2003), while the UN gets blamed. During the Rwandan genocide in 1994, American officials blamed the UN for not preventing the genocide, "despite the fact that Washington itself had blocked the Security Council from taking action in that crisis" (Tharoor, 2003).

During the Bosnian civil war, the UN Security Council declared five Bosnian cities to be "safe havens" under UN protection. The Council ordered UN troops to go in and called for demilitarization of Muslims inside the "safe havens" and end of attacks by Serbs. Under their mandate, UN troops could use force only in self-defense. When Serbs attacked Srebrenica, one of the "safe havens," in 1995, UN soldiers, not attacked themselves, just watched as about 8,000 men were killed in front of them (BBC Online, 4 September 2000).

The UN in many ways reflects the world. "Its record of success and failure is no worse than that of most representative national institutions, yet its detractors seem to expect the UN to succeed all the time" (Tharoor, 2003). Yet, the public view of the United Nations is often highly distorted by those who want to see the organization discredited and destroyed. Constantly repeating that the UN is an independent organization, writes Linda Polman (2004: 8), they have succeeded to make the public believe that the UN "has a life on its own." Slogans "the UN should intervened earlier," "more quickly," "with greater force," and "the UN must reform" are used to portray the organization as something independent from its member states.

American neo-conservatives, a very powerful group with immense influence on American politics, portray the UN as an organization that can make decisions on its own, without depending on its members. Vanden Heuvel (2006: 338) notes that their goal is to weaken the UN and diminish it as an "obstacle to American hegemony in international affairs." Feulner (Heritage Foundation, 2006), one of the neo-conservatives, writes that, "despite the goal of 'saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war,' there have been approximately 300 wars since 1945, resulting in over 22 million deaths." Instead of

punishing aggressors, the UN has authorized military action only two times – against North Korea and Iraq in 1991. In all other cases, writes Feulner, the UN did nothing, “waiting for NATO or some other coalition to act.” Nile Gardiner from Heritage Foundation, a powerful think tank, gave a neo-conservative view of the UN’s place in the world:

The United States will bypass the UN where it is seen to be obstructing American interests and will turn to coalitions of the willing in order to deal with specific threats to international security, and even humanitarian crises. America, together with close allies, may develop more bodies outside of the UN system to handle global issues. The United Nations will have to compete increasingly in a global marketplace of international institutions. Its privileged position as the dominant world body in areas such as human rights, humanitarian relief, and international development could be increasingly challenged, both by other multilateral institutions or by ad hoc coalitions. The UN, with its myriad agencies and vast bureaucracy, may struggle to compete in a 21st century world that demands immediate responses to threats and crises (Heritage Foundation, 2006).

What happened between India and Pakistan in 2002 was exactly what Gardiner has in mind. In May 2002, the threat of India and Pakistan using nuclear bombs against each other was very real. The UN did not get involved, but the Indian companies and American businesses that have heavily invested in India put pressure on the Indian government to resolve its differences with Pakistan. While other factors played a role too, the pressure from the business lobbies was something “the Indian government couldn’t ignore” (Friedman, 2006: 528).

Another problem the UN is facing ever since its creation is financing. The UN and its agencies and programs spend about \$20 billion annually (Global Policy Forum: UN Finance). Total average annual amount spent by all UN agencies and programs equals one fourth of the municipal budget of New York City (Albright, 2004). It is argued that, if all members paid their dues on time and in full, the UN would be able to function properly and implement its programs and missions (Walker, 1995). However, due to “members’ negligence in meeting their obligations” (Walker, 1995), the UN is “lacking the minimum funds to carry out the mandates demanded of it and is constantly begging member states to pay their dues” (Grenville-Wood, 1995: 3).

According to Global Policy Forum’s UN Budget Scale (2005), ten major contributors to the regular UN budget for 2006 were: the United States (22%); Japan (19.47%); Germany (8.66%); United Kingdom (6.13%); France (6.03%); Italy (4.89%); Canada (2.81%); Spain (2.52%); China (2.05%); Mexico (1.88%). These ten countries are expected to contribute around 75% to the UN annual budget, but to have one vote each in the General Assembly like the rest of the members who contribute between 0.01% and 0.02% to the budget (Bradshaw, 2007: 26-27).

It is important to note that the above mentioned contributors do not always give the promised funds to the UN. This practice reached its peak “with the rise of neo-conservative governments in the USA and Britain since the 1980s who were displeased with some of the UN’s operations” (Bradshaw, 2007: 26). During the 1990s, American debt to the UN was more than \$1 billion (Luck, 2003: 44). In the weeks after the 11 September 2001 attack, the United States paid its financial dues accumulated during the 1980s and 1990s (Luck, 2003: 46). As of 31 March 2007, UN members owed the UN \$1.35 billion, while the United States’ new debt is \$785 million (Global Policy Forum: UN Finance).

There is a penalty for those who do not pay its dues to the UN, but it is not used in practice. As stated in the UN Charter, the member states decide whether or not a penalty (their vote in the General Assembly can be taken away from them) for not

paying contributions to the UN will be applied (Polman, 2004: 12). To this day, the UN members refused to penalize themselves.

The 2003 Iraq crisis was one of the biggest tests of the UN's credibility and authority. The Security Council passed a resolution demanding Iraq's disarmament and cooperation with weapons inspectors. However, France and Russia disagreed with the US-UK claim that the resolution allowed for military action against Iraq. After France proposed to veto a resolution authorizing military action, the US made a decision to go to war without approval from the Security Council. "The failure of diplomacy was seen as a bad portent for the UN's future prospects" (BBC Online, 2 January 2007). In contrast, Tharoor (2003) sees the refusal to "serve as a rubber stamp for Washington" as a show of the UN's strength.

Days before the US invasion of Iraq, US President George Bush had predicted that "the UN would meet the fate of defunct League of Nations if it did not help confront Saddam Hussein." Nevertheless, in August 2007, the US and the UK sponsored a new UN resolution to authorize the UN to help the new Iraqi government promote national reconciliation and start regional dialogue on issues such as border security, energy and refugees (BBC Online, 11 August 2007). It seems that even the most powerful country in the history of humankind cannot solve all of its problems alone and that it still needs the UN.

This part has examined some of the recent UN troubles concerning peace and security around the world. The next part of the paper will discuss the need and prospects for the reform of the UN.

UN Reform

This part of the paper will discuss the need and prospects for the reform of the UN, its Charter, and the expansion of the Security Council.

To add to the UN's relevance in today's world, there is a need to reform the organization and its Charter and expand the Security Council to ensure that its membership reflects the current world rather than the balance of power in 1945 (The Carnegie Report, 1997: xliii; Annan, 2005; Karns, 2006: 143). Kofi Annan (2005) stresses that "if the UN is to be a vehicle through which states can meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, it needs major reforms to strengthen its relevance, effectiveness, and accountability."

While the Charter had been amended three times since 1945, its reform seems impossible to achieve (Samasuwo, 2006: 18). The UN Special Committee on the Charter and on the Strengthening the Role of the Organization was established in 1974, but its first proposed amendment to the Charter came only in March 1995, recommending deletion of the "enemy states" clauses (Willson, 1996: 115). "Enemy states" used to describe any state which during World War II has been an "enemy of any signatory of the UN Charter" (Willson, 1996: 120).

Kofi Annan (2005) believes that the Security Council must be reformed to incorporate states that financially, militarily, and diplomatically contribute most to the UN today, and to geographically represent the current membership of the organization. The UN Millennium Summit in 2000 proposed an expansion of the Council and addition of both permanent and non-permanent members. The United States and China, who can use veto to prevent reforms (Luck, 2003: 3), immediately opposed any expansion, wanting to "preserve their privileged positions and arguing that the Council's effectiveness would be eroded by the expansion" (Kumalo, 2006: 47). Pearson (1995: 119) stresses that "redistribution of permanent seats on the Security Council will be a difficult feat of diplomatic bargaining, but the longer it is delayed, the more authority of the Council will

suffer." Powerful members will be fighting to keep or increase their influence within the organization (Luck, 2003:5). Apart from the five permanent members of the Council, it will be difficult to satisfy other UN member states, writes Luck (2003: 50) and notes that considering all this, "the skewed character of the UN reform progress will be with us for the foreseeable future."

Currently, two significant groups of nations are pushing for the expansion of the Security Council. G4, constituting Brazil, Germany, Japan and India, want permanent seats for themselves. African Union, the group of 53 nations, wants at least two permanent seats for African countries (BBC Online, 12 July 2005).

Reforming the principle of non-intervention into sovereign states should be considered since wars are fought today more within than between states. In 2005, the World Summit confirmed that "state sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs cannot be used to prevent the UN from intervening if states fail to protect their populations" (Karns, 2006: 141-142). Bellamy and Williams (2006: 157) believe that one of the key UN reforms should be finding a way to proceed and act "in the face of humanitarian crises when the Security Council is deadlocked." They offer an example of Darfur and the fact that none of the five permanent members of the Council are willing to act, while the suffering and gross human rights violations continue.

Some proposals for the UN reform suggest that the organization should find an alternative to current financing. Suggestions include "instituting a global tax on currency transactions, environmental taxes, or taxes on arms trade." Experts doubt that the powerful member states on which the UN currently depends for funding will allow the organization to be less dependent on them (Global Policy Forum: UN Finance; Walker, 1995).

Kegley and Wittkopf (1995: 535) believe that the UN is a "design without a realistic structure... the organization is not empowered for the high purposes it has been asked to perform." Simoni (1995: 155) thinks that one of the main reasons the UN was never able to accomplish its aims set in the Charter regarding international peace and security and conflict prevention was the lack of effective UN peace force. The Carnegie Report (1997: xxvii) supports the establishment of UN peacekeeping forces:

The Commission supports the establishment of a rapid reaction force of some 5,000 to 10,000 troops, the core of which would be contributed by members of the Security Council... the record of international crises points out the need to respond rapidly and, if necessary, with force... the operational integrity of such a force requires that it not be assembled in pieces or in haste.

Willson (1996: 123) emphasizes that peacekeeping evolved into one of the most important UN functions, and any revisions of the Charter would have to make sure that peacekeeping is incorporated in it. At the same time, the UN must invest more in "preventive diplomacy and peacemaking," the area emphasized in *An Agenda for Peace*, a UN document from 1992 that examined key issues for effective collective security (Grenville-Wood, 1995: 7). In 1995, only 40 people worked on conflict prevention and peacemaking at the UN, compared to about 80,000 peacekeepers involved in various UN missions around the world at the time (Polanyi, 1995: 124).

Heinrich (1995: 95) believes that the opening of the UN Charter has been misleading ever since the organization was created. The UN was never "peoples" organization but an organization controlled and shaped by governments. Heinrich thinks that one of the reforms should be establishment of "the citizen dimension at the UN." He proposes something like the European Parliament of the European Union where representatives are chosen from national parliaments who are chosen in elections by the people (Heinrich, 1995: 96). This may bring some balance to the realist power at the UN and

ensure that not only interests of states but also interests of ordinary people are discussed and taken into consideration.

The alternative to the reform of the UN is having an outdated and trivial organization, contrary to its aims stated in the Charter. This would unquestionably "condemn the UN to the same fate as that of the League of Nations in the 1930s" (Simoni, 1995: 157). Still, the ultimate power rests with the member states whose foreign policies are shaped by the realist theory. The question is will they ever want to be members of an organization that has real power to enforce decisions contrary to the states' self-interests. "Because the changes required are so profound... one will [probably] have to wait for [the UN reform] until cataclysmic crisis occurs and undermine the *status quo*" (Simoni, 1995: 156).

This part of the paper has discussed the need and prospects for the reform of the UN, its Charter, and the expansion of the Security Council.

Conclusion

This paper has critically examined the United Nations organization and measured its aims stated in the UN Charter in respect to world peace and security. It has attempted to show that relations among states are influenced by the realist approach which views states as rational and unitary factors focusing on self-interests, national security, and balance of power. This approach influences states to pursue their national interest even if this is contrary to the interests of other states and peoples. Furthermore, the realists believe that powerful states create institutions such as the UN only to maintain or increase their share of power.

The paper has tried to demonstrate that the text of the UN Charter was influenced by realists, liberals, and idealists, the last two, contrary to the realists, believing that humans are in their nature good and capable of peaceful collaboration. However, it is evident that idealistic ideas were abandoned in favor of realist politics due to the Cold War tensions. As a result of the realist influence in international relations, the UN had never succeeded in saving humans from the "scourge of war," for the most of the second half of the twentieth century humans did not "live together in peace with one another as good neighbors" in many parts of the world, and the world was never united to "maintain international peace and security." Still, one of the main UN goals had been achieved. There was not another global war since the organization was founded in 1945.

The UN is an organization fully dependent on its member states. There is nothing the UN can do without the members' approval. As such, when peace and security fail or when the UN does not reach an agreement about deployment of peacekeepers to a war zone, the member states should get some (if not most) of the blame, not only the UN. As quoted above, American officials have blamed the UN for not preventing the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, even though the US government deliberately blocked any Security Council decisions concerning Rwanda and deployment of UN troops there.

The paper has discussed the need and prospects for the reform of the UN, its Charter, and the expansion of the Security Council. It is evident that the five permanent members of the Council will oppose any significant changes, but in order for the UN to have any relevance, the organization must reflect the world of today instead of the balance of power in 1945, and its aims should be adjusted to something that can be realistically achieved.

There are still those who consider the UN as the most widely accepted source of international legitimacy. Madeleine Albright (2004), the American permanent representative to the UN from 1993 to 1996, reminds that "legitimacy still has meaning,

even for empires. That is why George Bush and Colin Powell both made their major pre-war, pro-war presentations before a UN audience." Knight (2005: 537) believes that, apart from all its troubles and shortcomings, the UN will "remain a unique forum for peaceful prevention or resolution of conflicts between states."

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Appendix 1

Where the world stands on Burma

2007/09/28

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/7018285.stm>

As governments around the world consider how to respond to the protests in Burma, the BBC News website looks at the aims and influence of key Western and Asian players.

ASEAN

Relationship: The Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) has in the past appeared reluctant to condemn a fellow member but member-states appear increasingly uneasy. Asean foreign ministers meeting in New York urged the Burmese authorities to halt violence against the demonstrators.

Interests: Concern to preserve the unity of the regional bloc needs to be balanced against the desire for regional stability, and pressure from Western countries that wish to secure Asean support for action against the military regime in Rangoon.

Comment: "We hope that the Myanmar [Burmese] authorities and all other parties in Myanmar will appreciate the broader implications of their actions on the region as a whole and act accordingly." *Singapore foreign ministry, current Asean chair*

CHINA

Relationship: A close trading and diplomatic relationship it is seen as the country with the strongest potential to influence events in Burma. **It has blocked UN sanctions against Burma but recently called for "restraint" by "all" parties.**

Interests: **Burma's oil and gas reserves are important for a rapidly developing and energy-hungry China** but, as a regional power, Beijing also has an interest in ensuring that events in Burma do not lead to regional instability.

Comment: "China hopes that all parties in Myanmar exercise restraint and properly handle the current issue so as to ensure the situation there does not escalate and get complicated, and does not influence the stability of Myanmar and the peace and stability of the region." *Chinese foreign ministry*

EUROPEAN UNION

Relationship: While conscious of its lack of leverage over Burma, it is urging India, China and Asean to take a tougher line. Some sanctions are already in place. In 1996 the EU banned arms sales and expelled military attaches, and it froze the assets of individuals within the junta. It withdrew preferential trade status from Burma and subsequently cut off all non-humanitarian aid to the country. European Parliamentary deputies have called on the EU to work with the US and Asean to prepare measures against the Burmese government, including targeted sanctions.

Interests: Relatively few economic interests in Burma but France remains a major investor, with a joint gas project between the US firm Chevron and French Total.

Comment: "China is the puppet-master of Burma. The Olympics is the only real lever we have to make China act. The civilised world must seriously consider shunning China by using the Beijing Olympics to send the clear message that such abuses of human rights are not acceptable." *Edward McMillan-Scott, vice-president of the European Parliament*

INDIA

Relationship: It has close economic and diplomatic ties with Burma. It has expressed concern over the current crisis but generally maintains a careful silence over the situation, describing it as an internal affair of Burma. Former Defence Minister George Fernandez has described India's current position as "disgusting".

Interests: India is concerned above all with protecting its oil interests in Burma, signing a new deep-water exploration deal in the same week that protests got under way. India also sells arms to the military regime in Rangoon. But as the world's most populous democracy, India is under pressure from the West and from activists at home to take a stronger stand in support of democratic forces in Burma.

Comment: "As a close and friendly neighbour, India hopes to see a peaceful, stable and prosperous Myanmar, where all sections of the people will be included in a broad-based process of national reconciliation and political reform." *Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee*

RUSSIA

Relationship: While Russia is much less important than China as an ally and trading partner to Burma, Moscow has stood beside Beijing in opposing any attempts to bring foreign pressure to bear on the Burmese government.

Interests: Earlier this year Burma and Russia signed a deal that could lead to the construction of a Russian nuclear research reactor in Burma. Last year, Moscow offered fighter jets and air defence systems to Rangoon in exchange for access to Burmese oil. Russian commentators have suggested that a change of government in Rangoon would bring in an administration more susceptible to Western influence than the incumbents.

Comment: "We consider any attempts to use the latest developments to exercise outside pressure or interference in the domestic affairs of this sovereign state to be counterproductive. We still believe that the processes under way in Burma do not threaten international and regional peace and security." *Russian foreign ministry*

UNITED KINGDOM

Relationship: The UK's status as the former colonial power does not give it any particular influence as economic links have declined and London - in common with other Western governments - has been vocal in its condemnation of the military government.

Interests: The UK once had major interests in petroleum in Burma but no longer has any large-scale investment in the country. British companies continue to do business in Burma, with hardwoods being an important import. Campaigners have complained that UK government policy on trade with Burma is vague and not enforced.

Comment: "I want to see all the pressures of the world put on this regime now - sanctions, the pressure of the UN, pressure from China and all the countries in the region, India, pressure from the whole of the world." *UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown*

UNITED STATES

Relationship: Washington has called for political change in Burma and expressed support for the recent protests. In 1997 the US banned new investment in Burma, and in 2003 it banned most Burmese imports and dollar transactions. It has announced it will impose further sanctions against 14 senior officials in Burma's government, including the country's acting prime minister and defence minister. But in common with the other Western countries, the US realises its influence is weak when compared to that of China, India and Asean.

Interests: As a result of sanctions few economic interests remain, a major exception being the US share in the Chevron-Total gas project.

Comment: "The world is watching the people of Burma take to the streets to demand their freedom and the American people stand in solidarity with these brave individuals." *US President George W Bush*