parliamentary systems note that they promise the ultimate check: Legislators can bring down governments at any time. This offers protections against abusive governments that presidential systems, with only periodically scheduled elections, cannot.

See also: Bicameral Parliamentary Systems; Majoritarian Party Systems; United Kingdom.

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Peacekeeping Forces

Peacekeeping, strictly speaking, is a noncombat military operation deployed with the consent of the major parties to a conflict to monitor or facilitate the implementation of a cease-fire agreement. The United Nations (UN) established its first peacekeeping mission in May 1948 to supervise the truce in Palestine. Since then, the term “peacekeeping operations” (or peace operations) has come to refer also to a wider variety of interventions. Peacekeeping operations more broadly understood are carried out by UN or multilateral forces (such as those of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO) with the purpose of facilitating the establishment and maintenance of peace in a situation of conflict. In the early twenty-first century peacekeeping missions might be deployed to maintain a cease-fire, to assist in the maintenance of a comprehensive settlement, or to protect the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Examples of peacekeeping forces include the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire deployed in April 2004, the NATO-led Kosovo Force deployed in June 2002 under a UN
mandate, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force deployed in Afghanistan in January 2002, the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti established in July 1996, and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda established in August 1993. Although peacekeeping is most often carried out by UN forces or under UN authorization, regional organizations may also lead such operations. Examples include the intervention of the Ceasefire Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) in Sierra Leone in 1997 and 1998 and efforts since 1996 to establish a peacekeeping force within the Southern African Development Community.

Peacekeeping can be separated into two eras, roughly divided by the end of the Cold War in 1989. In contrast to traditional peacekeeping, second-generation peacekeeping missions are characterized by broader mandates, sometimes in the absence of negotiated settlements, and often involve civilian and police components, as well as military forces. The post–Cold War proliferation of intrastate or civil wars, many between ethnic factions, also has marked second-generation peacekeeping operations, the majority of which have been deployed in intrastate conflicts. Another change has been a rise in the number of peacekeeping operations. Although the UN deployed just eighteen missions between 1948 and 1990, it established almost double that number in the 1990s alone. The trend toward more extensive demands on peacekeeping forces only seems to be increasing. Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, there has been intense international focus, especially by the United States, on reconstruction and nation building in weak states considered to be dangerous havens for international terrorists. Thus, 2001 and subsequent U.S.–led actions in Afghanistan and Iraq may mark another major era in postconflict peace building.

TRADITIONAL PEACEKEEPING

The UN deployed the first two peacekeeping observer missions in the late 1940s, to Palestine and to India and Pakistan, but it was not until the 1956 Suez Crisis that it deployed its first force-level peacekeeping operation. The role of the UN Emergency Force (UNEF I) was first to supervise the withdrawal of French, Israeli, and British troops from Egyptian territory, and then to supervise the cease-fire and serve as a buffer between Egyptian and Israeli troops. The principles of peacekeeping established in UNEF I by then UN Secretary-General Dag Hammerskjöld (1905–1961) and Canadian diplomat Lester B. Pearson (1897–1972) have marked all subsequent missions. These include the need for consent by the parties to the conflict; the use of force only in self-defense; impartiality and nonintervention; troop contingents composed of voluntary forces from small, neutral countries; and control of day-to-day operations by the secretary-general.

UNEF I’s success in facilitating the withdrawal of French and British troops from Egypt set high expectations for future missions and marked the beginning of an “assertive” period in peacekeeping, which lasted from 1956 until 1967. During this period, the UN deployed missions in Lebanon, the Republic of Congo, West New Guinea, Yemen, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, and India-Pakistan. Enthusiasm over peacekeeping, however, was not to last. Two events in the 1960s underscored its limits. The first was the Congo crisis. Responding to the new Congolese government’s request for technical assistance and help with the establishment of law and order, the UN first deadlocked on the mission’s authorization. The debate then turned to operational issues, and some member states—including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and France—refused to pay their regular financial assessments. Citing Article 19 of

proliferate: to grow in number; to multiply at a high rate
factionalism: a separation of people into competing, adversarial, and self-serving groups, usually in government

neutrality: the quality of not taking sides, as in a conflict
the UN Charter, the United States, in turn, attempted to put forward a motion disallowing the USSR’s vote, a move that threatened the USSR’s withdrawal from the UN. The Congo crisis thus highlighted the key problem of peacekeeping during the Cold War: the lack of agreement on security issues among the five permanent members of the Security Council (the United States, USSR, United Kingdom, Republic of China, and France).

A second key event was the withdrawal of UNEF I from Egyptian territory in May 1967. Following tensions in the region, the Egyptian government decided that it no longer wanted foreign troops in its territory and Gaza. Abiding by the principle of consent of the parties and failing to convince Israel to allow forces to be deployed on its side of the border, the UNEF withdrew. Shortly thereafter, on June 5, war commenced between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, highlighting the fragility of the peace that UNEF I had kept for the last decade without addressing the root causes of Israeli-Egyptian hostilities.

In the 1970s peacekeeping forces were deployed in only three UN operations (in the Middle East, the Golan Heights, and Lebanon). No new missions were deployed in the decade after 1978 until the 1988 deployment of forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan and in Iran and Iraq.

SECOND-GENERATION PEACEKEEPING

In the late 1980s events in southern Africa called for peacekeeping both in Angola and Namibia. The mission in Namibia, in particular, was a milestone as the UN’s first “multidimensional” peacekeeping operation. Established in 1989, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was charged with ensuring Namibia’s independence from South African occupation and creating the conditions for free and fair elections. The mission was composed of civilian, military, and police components, whose work included dismantling the South African military structure in Namibia, monitoring a cease-fire between SWAPO and South African forces, negotiating a Code of Conduct for the elections, holding regular meetings with political actors at all levels, monitoring the South West African Police, and keeping Namibians informed of the transition process through radio and television broadcasts and other media.

The end of the Cold War also signaled a major change in attitudes toward peacekeeping. It was a time of both increased demands and expectations. On the one hand, the dismantling of the Soviet empire prompted new conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere that called for international action. On the other, the end of the Cold War suggested an end to the debilitating divisions on security issues in the UN Security Council that had crippled pre-1989 peacekeeping efforts. In 1992 UN Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali’s (b. 1922) An Agenda for Peace, mapped out a plan to strengthen and improve the UN’s capacity for maintaining world peace. Most notably, the Agenda extended the range of peacekeeping, discussing not only traditional peacekeeping, but also preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and postconflict peace building. That year the international community undertook three of the largest and most complex peace operations to date in the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, and Somalia. The successes and failures of these missions have marked subsequent peacekeeping doctrine.

Initially established in March 1992 to ensure demilitarization in designated areas of Croatia, the mandate of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was later extended to include the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina and preventive monitoring in the Republic of Macedonia. In 1994 UNPROFOR was joined by NATO forces that provided air support in Bosnia and
Herzegovina, eventually breaking the four-year siege of Sarajevo by Bosnian Serb forces. Under the December 1995 peace agreement among Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs, authority for the peace operation was transferred from UN peace forces to the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR). Transfer of territory between Bosnian entities and demobilization were undertaken early the following year. IFOR also was charged with facilitating civilian and political reconstruction, including projects as extensive as the rebuilding of roads.

In Cambodia, peacekeeping forces were charged with ensuring the implementation of the Comprehensive Settlement on the Cambodian Conflict signed in October 1991. Under this settlement, the UN was granted unprecedented power in the establishment of the Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The four major Cambodian factions delegated to the UN all powers necessary for the implementation of the agreements, including the control and supervision of the civil administration and responsibility to organize the elections, through which the
country could choose its own leaders. Despite some questions raised about UNTAC’s neutrality with regard to different political parties, the mission overall was successful. Established in February 1992, UNTAC withdrew on schedule in September 1993.

By contrast, the intervention in Somalia, a humanitarian success but a military and political failure, highlighted the problems associated with complex peace building. Following the ouster of Somali President Mohamed Siad Barre (1919–1995) in 1991, civil war had broken out. In April 1992 the UN Observer Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM I) was established to protect the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to monitor the cease-fire in Mogadishu. Continued fighting and insecurity, however, prompted enlargement of its mandate to include peace-building. In December, it was joined by the U.S.–led United Task Force (later, UNOSOM II), a force of over thirty thousand troops from twenty-four countries, charged with securing the environment for humanitarian assistance. After continued clashes with Somali militias, including an attack on a group of Pakistani peacekeepers, UNOSOM II began a sustained effort to capture and arrest warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed (d. 1996) for his role in the attacks. The “hunt for Aideed” raised questions about the neutrality of the occupying forces, prompting further hostility against the peacekeepers. On October 3, 1993, eighteen U.S. Rangers were killed in Mogadishu. The incident shocked Americans back home, precipitating U.S. withdrawal.

Escalating involvement in Somalia came to be known as “mission creep” or the “Somalia syndrome,” and the legacy of Somalia has been a reluctance, especially on the part of the United States, to engage in further peacemaking operations. Many observers note this legacy as one reason for the UN’s failure to act to prevent the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Prior to the genocide, UN peacekeeping forces were deployed in Rwanda in September 1993 to implement the Arusha Peace Agreement, but throughout the following months as UN officers warned of the impending violence, UN officials failed to extend the mission’s limited mandate. There is a heated debate among observers over just how effective peacekeeping forces could have been in preventing the genocide, but the fact remains that the UN and the United States stood by, with the United States avoiding the use of the term “genocide” so that it would not be obliged to act, and the UN withdrawing forces even amidst the killing. The UN’s own critical evaluation of its role in the Rwanda tragedy highlights many key failures.

In the 1990s peacekeeping forces also were deployed in other conflicts around the world, in Africa (the Aouzou Strip, Angola, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone), Asia (Tajikistan and East Timor), Europe (Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirium, Kosovo, and Prevlaka), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Haiti, Guatemala). Two of these operations, in particular, illustrate the new broader nature of post–Cold War peacekeeping: the UN interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). In Kosovo, the UN-led international civil operation established in June 1999 was vested with authority over legislative and executive powers, and over the administration of the judiciary, undertaking a massive effort involving humanitarian assistance, civil administration, democratization and institution building, and reconstruction and economic development. In East Timor, UNTAET was established in October 1999, to assist in the transition to independence following a UN-organized referendum (“popular consultation”) on East Timorese status. In carrying out this task, UNTAET, like the Kosovo mission, exercised unprecedented sovereign authority.

As the responsibilities of peacekeeping continued to grow in the post–Cold War era, it became clear that demands were far outstretching organizational

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**warlord:** a leader, usually over a small region, who governs by military force

**interim:** for a limited time, during a period of transition

**democratization:** a process by which the powers of government are moved to the people of a region or to their elected representatives

**referendum:** a popular vote on legislation, brought before the people by their elected leaders or public initiative

**sovereignty:** autonomy; or, rule over a political entity
capacities. In 2000, therefore, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (b. 1938) commissioned a group led by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi (b. 1934) to write a report on reform. The Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, the so-called Brahimi report, enumerated twenty-one broad recommendations, based on a “holistic” approach to conflict emphasizing the links between poverty, development, and war. Key among the recommendations were the need for more integrated responses and related organizational reforms, including better communication between the secretary-general and the Security Council. Echoing one of the oft-cited lessons of the Rwandan crisis, the report stated that “the Secretariat must tell the Security Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear, when formulating or changing mission mandates” (United Nations 2000).

As the implementation of the Brahimi report began, the international community was shaken by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In the aftermath U.S.-led military forces ousted the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, seen as a base for international terrorist operations. In December 2001 the process of rebuilding Afghanistan began with the signing of the Bonn Agreement, which established an Interim Afghan Authority. The interim authority in this case, however, in which Afghans would take the leading role, was much more minimal than in either the Kosovo and East Timor models. Under the Agreement, the UN also authorized the deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to maintain security in Kabul. The “light footprint” approach of the UN in Afghanistan also is evident in that peacekeeping forces were not deployed outside of the capital, even though many observers saw them as necessary to ensure the much-needed delivery of humanitarian assistance. Following U.S.-led military action in Iraq, the UN was again called on, this time to manage the transition to Iraqi self-government, beginning on June 30, 2004.

**CHALLENGES OF PEACEKEEPING**

Peacekeeping forces face a variety of challenges. The first is the decision to intervene. Traditionally, peacekeeping operations have been deployed only in situations where the parties to the conflict have signed a cease-fire agreement and requested assistance. This rule was relaxed in the post–Cold War era as more extensive peacemaking and peace-building operations were undertaken under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. One of the lessons of the 1990s, underscored in the Brahimi report, is that peacekeeping operations, while they can be incredibly effective in some tasks such as ensuring the provision of humanitarian assistance, cannot be expected to build peace in all conflict situations. There are limits to peacekeeping imposed by the complexities and rigors of war, as well as by the resources available to specific missions. Financing is another key and related problem for peacekeeping, which has become more acute as the mandates of peacekeeping missions become more complex. The budget for UN peacekeeping in 2003 and 2004 reached U.S.$2.17 billion. While refusing to provide adequate funding for peacekeeping missions, some member states blame the organization for resulting failures.

In the Afghanistan and Iraq crises, the UN’s response of recommending more minimalist UN involvement reflects these challenges. Yet while it makes sense for the UN to be cautious in undertaking peacekeeping operations for which it has insufficient support, this response is problematic. Imperfect as it is, the UN is a last hope in many conflicts. If it does not act, who will?

“Imperfect as it is, the UN is a last hope in many conflicts. If it does not act, who will?”
A related challenge is the construction of an appropriate mandate, the basis of any peacekeeping operation. A mandate must be both clear and realistic, specifying what the mission is to accomplish and the rules of engagement. It also must sometimes be adjusted to respond to the changing nature of a conflict, as the Rwanda crisis illustrates, while at the same time not falling victim to “mission creep.”

The configuration and equipping of the peacekeeping force are a further challenge, especially important in missions involving combat. UN peacekeeping forces may be composed of contingents of troops from dozens of different countries with little experience working together. For this reason, regional contingents that are more rapidly deployed and better organized may be better placed to respond to crises, either directly or under UN authorization.

Finally, one of the most difficult challenges of contemporary peacekeeping is the maintenance of impartiality and legitimacy. The Somali case illustrates this issue well. It is no easy task, especially in weak or failed states such as Afghanistan where basic institutions are nonexistent or lack legitimacy. The importance of impartiality in peacekeeping further underscores why the United States, the occupying power in Iraq, was especially ill-equipped to oversee the transition back to self-government.

Given the increasing number and scope of peacekeeping operations since the Cold War, the burden of these challenges has only grown since 1989. If 2001 marked the beginning of a new era of nation building, they will grow further still.

See also: Somalia; United Nations.

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