

MPH MVN

10/1 SIMULATION



DISARMAMENT AND
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE
BACKGROUND GUIDE
VANCOUVER MODEL UNITED NATIONS

~ the 13th annual conference ~



Topic A: Foreign Intervention in Civil Wars

Overview

Under its founding charter the United Nations has a mandate to protect international peace and security. However since the conclusion of the Second World War, conflicts between states have been relatively scarce; instead, conflicts within them have been occurring with increasing frequency. The problem is that the UN was designed to handle international conflicts: when it comes to internal conflicts, the UN finds itself without a framework to handle them other than the general mandate to preserve peace and security.¹

To this day the UN relies on individually drafted resolutions from the Security Council to intervene. Not only does this delay the UN's involvement, but in some cases the UN may not involve itself at all. If even one permanent member of the UNSC votes against intervention, the UN can find itself powerless to assist, as there is no mandate that obligates intervention into internal conflicts.²

The UN charter was not written with the UN as an internal affairs mediator in mind; rather, the UN was envisioned as a body that operates to mediate conflicts between states. This problem is becoming increasingly apparent as the UN has attempted to solve internal security problems, ranging from intervention in civil wars in the Congo, Indonesia, and, most recently, in Syria.

In the past 68 years since the United Nations charter went into effect, the UN has conducted 68 peacekeeping operations, which have ranged from direct military intervention to monitoring electoral integrity. Fifteen operations are currently ongoing in Western Sahara, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, Congo, South Sudan, Mali, Libya, Haiti, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Middle East, Lebanon, Golan Heights, Cyprus and Kosovo. Many of these were interventions into civil wars, and each has relied upon a resolution made specifically for the situation by the Security Council.³

This committee's purpose is therefore to establish a clear, effective framework for UN intervention into civil conflicts. It must take into account many factors, which include elections, social reconciliation, military goals, reconstruction and more.

Timeline: Internal Conflicts

Start Date	End Date	Name	Acronym	Purpose
1960	1964	United Nations Operation in the Congo	ONUC	Prevent a civil war, end the secessionist movement and remove foreign troops
1962	1963	UN Security Force in West New Guinea	UNSF	Monitor the ceasefire during Dutch withdrawal
1964	Ongoing	UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	UNFICYP	Prevent conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots

¹ Fortna, Virginia Page. "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War." Diss. Columbia University, 2004. Web. 23 July 2013.

² Fortna, Virginia Page. "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War." Diss. Columbia University, 2004. Web. 23 July 2013.

³ Aguirre, Mariano, and Joana Abrisketa. "Pressing Issues for UN Peacekeeping Operations." *Peace & Security*. Transnational Institute, 29 Sept. 2009. Web. 04 Aug. 2013.

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1989	1990	United Nations Transition Assistance Group	UNTAG	Supervise Namibia's Elections and transition to independence
1989	1992	UN Observer group in Central America	ONTUCA	Monitor ceasefire in Nicaragua
1991	1995	UN Angola Verification Mission II	UNAVEMII	Enforce ceasefire in Angolan civil war
1991	1995	UN Observer Mission in El Salvador	ONUSAL	Enforce ceasefire in El Salvador civil war
1992	1993	UN Operation in Somalia	UNOSOM I	Enforce ceasefire in Somalia. Replaced by UNOSOM II
1993	1996	UN Observer Mission in Liberia	UNOMIL	Monitor ceasefire and elections in Liberia
1994	2002	UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan	UNMOT	Monitor ceasefire in Tajikistan civil war
1995	1997	UN Angola Verification Mission III	UNAVEM III	Monitor ceasefire and disarmament
1995	1996	UN Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia	UNCRO	Attempts to implement a ceasefire
1997	1997	UN Verification Mission in Guatemala	MINUGUA	Monitor ceasefire in Guatemala's civil war
1998	1999	UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone	UNOMSIL	Monitor disarmament and demobilization in Sierra Leone
1999	2005	UN Mission in Sierra Leone	UNAMSIL	Help stabilize and disarm Sierra Leone
1999	2010	UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	MONUC	Monitor ceasefire in the Democratic republic of the Congo
2011	Ongoing	UN Mission in the republic of South Sudan	UNMISS	Assist the new state of South Sudan in the Second Sudanese Civil War
2011	Ongoing	Assist the new state of Libya	UNSMIL	Assist the State of Libya in the Libyan civil war
2012	2012	UN Support Mission in Syria	UNSMIS	Monitor the ceasefire agreement in Syria

Historical Analysis

While the specifics vary depending on the policies and political climates of the countries involved, in the last century the world has demonstrated a tendency to involve itself in the civil wars of other countries. Such external interventions are often passed off as humanitarian missions to prevent bloodshed and property damage, but are more often than not at least partially motivated by the intervening country's interests, be them economic or political. In the 1918 Russian Civil War, the Allies intervened partially due to fear of the Bolsheviks, which later became the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Congo Crisis was exacerbated by Belgium's intervention to protect its business interests there. Many people contend that the US intervention in the Iraqi "Civil War" (a term still disputed by many people) has more to do

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with Iraq's oil reserves than with preventing inter-communal violence. Nations have demonstrated a tendency to act mainly in their own interests when intervening in a civil conflict: a tendency that has shown that the concerns of the warring nations citizens are often secondary.

Since the UN's inception, foreign interventions have been significantly less mercenary in nature, and often less direct. After the debacle of the United Nations Operation in the Congo, detailed below in the *UN involvement* section, the UN has displayed a reluctance to directly intervene in civil wars. Instead, UN operations are given mandates to "facilitate peace talks," "monitor elections" and/or to establish refugee camps. This means that developed nations have not had the same opportunity to intervene to protect their own interests at the expense of the host country. At the same time, it exposes the UN to a glaring weakness: should combatants refuse to negotiate, or to consider a ceasefire, the UN can easily be rendered ineffectual in its attempts to resolve or mediate the conflict. This is most recently demonstrated in their attempts to resolve the Syrian civil war, where the UN operation ended because the situation became too dangerous for unarmed peacekeepers to be present.⁴

Current Situation

There is a huge demand for UN peacekeeping forces. Suggestions for new missions appear almost every day, the largest one currently being Syria. However, because of the lack of a clear framework for UN interventions, the UN oftentimes finds itself in a gridlock - nations can engage in bitter dispute over the specifics of a scenario, or can dispute how to best tackle each individual problem. This leads to long delays before the UN can intervene, during which time the problem often escalates. An obvious example is once again the civil conflict in Syria. A UN intervention in its early stages may have been enough to end the conflict before many people were killed. As it stands now, well over 100,000 people⁵ have died and, as mentioned, the conflict has escalated to a level where it is unsafe for peacekeepers to even be present.

Major Nations

The United States can be considered the most important nation in this issue. It has demonstrated very interventionist tendencies, with Afghanistan and Iraq among its most recent operations. It is one of the few nations with the military to intervene effectively on a global scale, and the country has the political willingness to do so. In UN peacekeeping missions it is also integral; the US alone provides 22% of the UN peacekeeping budget. NATO nations generally share the same stance as the US.

China and Russia are often on the other side of the fence. Typically skeptical of UN interventions, they will often oppose proposed UN involvement in civil issues. A recent example is Syria. China and Russia have advocated against any military intervention in the country. Whether this is a strictly humanitarian and ideologically motivated stance or whether this is a geo-politically and economically motivated stance is up for debate.

⁴ Aguirre, Mariano, and Joana Abrisketa. "Pressing Issues for UN Peacekeeping Operations." *Peace & Security*. Transnational Institute, 29 Sept. 2009. Web. 04 Aug. 2013.

⁵ Kendall, Bridget. "Syria Death Toll Now above 100,000, Says UN Chief Ban." *BBC News*. BBC, 25 July 2013. Web. 05 Aug. 2013.

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Syria

The most pressing issue that the committee's decision will affect is the Syrian civil war. With the death toll rising, passing 100,000 this past summer, many in Syria are requesting aid from international sources. The UN, however, is effectively hamstrung by opposition from China and Russia.

Russia and China support Syria for significant trade and military reasons. The Russian Navy's only port in the Mediterranean is leased from the Syrian government. Syrian contracts in the Russian defense industry likely exceeds \$4 billion, and Moscow has signed a \$550 million deal for combat training jets. This is in addition to an arms trade worth \$162 million a year. China is Syria's third largest importer. A 2010 report by the Jamestown Foundation, a Washington-based research and analysis institute, concluded that "Beijing's renewed interest in Damascus—the traditional terminus node of the ancient Silk Road ... indicates that China sees Syria as an important trading hub." However, both nations do say they wish for an end to the violence.

This is in stark contrast to the position of the US, France and the UK, who support the rebel groups in the war. In the US, conservative elements are calling for "immediate" action on Syria, despite Security Council vetoes preventing "legitimate" international intervention. France has provided material aid to the rebel groups, though this does not include lethal weapons. The UK as well has provided the rebel groups with material aid, and has condemned the Assad regime.

Unlike Libya, where the Security Council imposed a no-fly zone and assisted rebel groups materially, Syria has received almost no support from the UN. The UNSC has attempted to pass resolutions condemning the Assad regime, or demanding that he stop the killing and answer calls aimed at finding a Syrian-led solution to the conflict. However, vetoes from China and Russia have prevented them from taking any effective action. This diplomatic impasse has meant that the only intervention that would be possible in Syria would be unilateral or NATO-led; but these would have no international legitimacy, and could be condemned as illegal violations of a nation's sovereignty. A framework for UN intervention, one similar to the UN's mandate to preserve international peace and security, would go a long way to solving this civil impasse. Such an agreement would elucidate the terms, conditions, and purposes of future civil missions of the United Nations.

UN Involvement

As previously mentioned, the UN has been involved with 68 peacekeeping operations. Many of them have been declared successful. Others have not. The following are three examples of peacekeeping operations, one considered a "pyrrhic victory at best", the other two widely regarded as successes. By analyzing the successes and failures contained in cases of past involvement, it is possible to determine what to and what not to include in a resolution for the future.

United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC)

After gaining independence from Belgium in 1960, Congo entered a period of instability caused by the Belgian commanders' refusal to "Africanize" the officer corps of the Congo military. Because of this, disorder and mutiny broke out. Soon after, Belgium intervened to protect Belgian citizens in the Congo at the request of Moïse Tshombé. Tshombé wanted independence of Katanga, Congo's richest province. With the support of the Belgians, he officially declared independence on July 10.

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The Prime Minister and President of the Congo requested assistance from the UN on July 12 to regain Katanga. The Security Council adopted resolution 143, which called upon Belgium to remove its troops from the Congo. This resolution also authorized the Secretary General to facilitate the withdrawal of Belgian troops, maintain law and order, and to help establish the new Congo government. This mandate was extended to include the maintenance of territorial integrity of the Congo.

Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, dissatisfied with Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld's refusal to use UN troops to subdue the secessionists in Katanga, decided to attempt an invasion of Katanga on his own and requested the assistance of the Soviet Union. The invasion failed completely, not even reaching Katanga's borders. It led to dissension and instability in the Congo government, culminating in Lumumba's arrest by the Congo President and his death by a firing squad under the command of secessionist forces. Only after Lumumba's death did the UN authorize the use of force beyond self defense with Resolution 161, which urged the UN to "take immediately all appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo, including arrangements for ceasefire, the halting of all military operations, the prevention of clashes, and the use of force, if necessary, in the last resort."

In August the UN launched Operation Rampauch due to Tshombé's failure to comply with the Security Council resolution to expel foreign mercenaries and because Tshombé had no intention of reuniting Katanga with the Congo as he agreed to do in earlier peace talks that year. The Operation was initially a success, but it failed to expel the mercenaries; merely, the Belgian officers were removed from the country due to actions by the Belgian ambassador.

To expel the foreign mercenaries and capture Tshombé, the UN launched Operation Morthor. It was a total fiasco from the start, and failed to accomplish either of its goals. UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld decided to personally speak with Tshombé to end the conflict, but his plane crashed en route, killing him.

The UN appointed a new secretary general, U Thant. He authorized two subsequent Operations, the first, Unokat, destroyed Tshombé's roadblocks and seized military outposts. The second, Operation Grand Slam, was a success, and ended the Katanga secession immediately by seizing Katanga political and military infrastructure.

The UN intervention in Congo demonstrated how forceful intervention, when not planned properly, could actually cause an unstable situation to deteriorate. The UN member states were sharply divided on multiple issues from the level of force that should be allowed to how the mandate should be executed. And while Operation Grand Slam stopped the secession, it also cost over \$400 million USD which nearly bankrupted the UN.⁶ Once the UN departed, fighting resumed again until Mobutu seized power and started an authoritarian regime that would last 3 decades and cause the deterioration of the Congo. It has since been described as a "pyrrhic victory at best."

United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA)

The United Nations launched ONUCA on November 7 1989. It was a 625 person group consisting of 260 unarmed peacekeepers as well as supporting technicians, responsible for halting cross border infiltration and cutting support for rebels in the region. Later in the mission, however, ONUCA received direct

⁶ Trueman, Chris. "The United Nations and the Congo." *History Learning Site*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Aug. 2013.

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military support in the form of a battalion of paratroopers and four rifle companies to facilitate the disbanding of Contra, a rebel organization in Nicaragua. This is considered a major success in military intervention, where UN operations directly lead to fair and free elections in Nicaragua.

United Nations Observer Group in El Salvador (ONUSAL)

El Salvador had been, up until UN sponsored talks in 1991, plagued by an intense civil war. Delegations from both the FMLN and the Salvadoran Government met in New York for a peace conference, and were successful in signing a final agreement on December 31, 1991. This agreement called for various changes in the political structure of the country that would be beneficial for democracy in the country. The agreement also called for the UN to intervene in the country to monitor the implementation of various facets of the agreement. This included the abolishment of various parts of the military and police forces that were involved in human rights violations and their replacement with a new, UN-trained National Police which included personnel from both the FMLN and the old Salvadoran police force. The UN also provided humanitarian assistance for reconstruction, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees helped the return and re-establishment of refugees. The UN also supported the reintegration of former troops into the Salvadoran military. The UN also coordinated the first open elections which were declared "free and fair" by international observers. This is a case of a non-military intervention into a civil war by the UN that can be considered a great success. The country is stable to this day.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Ideally, a resolution would outline a framework for UN interventions that would consider military, social and economic impacts of the conflict and the intervention. However considering the widely varying policies between nations, such a resolution could take a myriad of forms. However, the following factors must be considered in the decision:

Is an intervention justified?

This issue is very pressing for many states, such as China and Middle Eastern countries. Under the UN's founding charter it is obligated to protect international peace and security, so is therefore obligated to intervene when a civil conflict reaches a point where it threatens peace between states. The line between national and international conflict is, however, very fine and very difficult to define. The committee could decide that if refugees are fleeing the country in large numbers it could be considered a conflict that threatens international peace. This however could define a huge number of conflicts as "international." The other extreme would be if fighting actually spilled over into neighbouring states. While this is definitely an issue where the UN would deem to be "international," it runs the risk of having already grown to a large scale where the UN would be hard pressed to intervene successfully, not to mention the immense loss of life and infrastructure damages that could have potentially been avoided. This could be considered the most pressing issue the committee faces because should it not be resolved, future conflicts could be rendered ineffectual merely by the reluctance of certain key nations to intervene, as seen in the Syrian crisis.

Limits of the Intervention

Should an intervention be deemed necessary, delegates must consider a wide range of different methods of intervention. Certain countries, such as the US and UK, are much more likely to be in favour of a more direct intervention, even including a military one. Other nations, such as Russia and China, are more

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likely to be in favour of an intervention that doesn't violate a nation's sovereignty in any form. Such an intervention could be an attempt for a ceasefire, to facilitate negotiations, to establish refugee camps or potentially a no fly zone. The degree of intervention would of course vary depending on the severity of the situation, and delegates should also consider at what point a military or economic (sanctions) intervention is justified.

Social Reconciliation

After a civil war one of the primary concerns of the UN is the reintegration of combatants into civilian society, as well as the reconciliation of the opposing parties. This problem is especially pronounced in wars started over religion, race or in cases of genocide. A possibility for the committee to consider in order to prevent violence between parties would be the formation of a UN security mission to monitor the situation, and to intervene when necessary. This mission would also need to take into account government prejudice against one group, and ensure that the mission monitors this as well.

Elections

Once the conflict is over, a government must be established. History of previous conflicts has shown that in a post conflict situation, should a free and fair election not be established, then the situation is ripe for a coup d'état or further conflict. A mandate for the UN to monitor and administer elections in a post-conflict state could resolve this issue; the problem here is this could be considered a violation of sovereignty by some states. Another possibility would be for the UN to monitor elections only when requested. This resolves the sovereignty issue, but leaves open the very real possibility of a fraudulent election should the UN not be involved.

Security and Policing

Once a resolution to a conflict has been determined, oftentimes violence is either still present, or simply very possible in the social climate. This, combined with a large number of combatants forced to reintegrate into civilian society and the inundation of illegal weaponry a state experiences after a civil war means that an effective police force and military is incredibly important. However, a post civil war state is often not in the position to provide a strong, fair police force and military. As with many of the other issues, one of the largest disputes over the UN assisting in policing is sovereignty. Should the state not allow UN assistance, the alternative exists for the assistance from nations close either geographically or politically.

Bloc Positions

Bloc positions can be broadly divided among North-South lines. Members of NATO, as well as Major non-NATO allies of the US are generally in favour of intervention. In most peacekeeping operations it is these nations that supply most of the funds and resources for the mission. Russia and its satellite states are typically skeptical of UN interventions. Finally, Middle Eastern Nations and China are typically the largest opponents of UN interventions. The African Union can also play a significant role in conflicts in Africa.

North

The North-South divide is a geopolitical divide. Generally, the North is defined to include the United States, Canada, Israel, Europe and parts of East Asia including Russia. These nations are generally

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wealthier, and in fact comprise four fifths of the world income despite having only a quarter of it's population. Australia, New Zealand and South Korea can be considered part of the North for this example, despite their southern latitude.

The Northern nations generally are in favour of intervention, though Russia is an exception to this rule, being less willing to interfere. These are the nations that most support intervention in Syria, and have traditionally supported intervening in past civil wars. Most recently, the conflict in Afghanistan has been dominated by troops provided primarily by northern countries. Delegates representing these countries should look towards a resolution that strongly supports foreign intervention.

South

Southern nations, especially China and the Middle East, are generally the opponents of intervention. It can be argued that one of the primary reasons for this is that many southern nations often lack the military and/or political stability to intervene in other nations. Therefore, their interests when interventions occur are not supported, rather those of Northern nations are put first.

It is important to note that a vast majority of interventions take place in Southern Nations: many of them are therefore strongly in favour of a resolution that would not allow any external intervention in a civil war unless requested by the host government. Especially in some unstable nations, and those that distrust western intentions, a UN intervention would be viewed with skepticism.

It is interesting to note that, despite comparatively weak militaries and resources compared to their northern counterparts, and the more anti-intervention stance they generally hold, many Southern nations will contribute troops and resources for UN missions where they have economic, political or cultural interests. China, for example, has volunteered a large number of troops for UN missions in Africa, despite their strong non-interventionist policies. This may be because of China's vested interest in Africa economically. China is a bit of an exception in Southern nations, being a nation with a very large economy and military capable of intervention.

African Union

The African Union is an important player in peacekeeping in Africa. One of the AU's objectives is to "promote peace, security and stability on the continent." To accomplish this end, the Peace and Security Council has the capability to "take initiatives and actions it deems appropriate." Since Africa has experienced a number of coup d'etats and civil wars in the past, and since many UN interventions would and do take place on this continent, this body is very important to take into consideration.

In previous civil wars, such as the recent one in Cote d'Ivoire, the AU has sent in peacekeeping troops to monitor the transition. The Union is also important because, as mentioned in the South section (above), many nations view UN intervention with skepticism. The AU, on the other hand, could be an excellent moderator should an African country be against a UN mission.

In 2004, in response to the ongoing civil conflict in Darfur, Sudan, the AU deployed 7000 peacekeepers to Darfur. While critics have stated that the AU force was under equipped, undermanned and poorly funded, the AU force was the only peacekeeping force allowed in the region: the Sudanese government refused to allow the UN to deploy a larger, better equipped peacekeeping force to the area to replace them until December 31, 2007. The AU force cooperated and coordinated with the UN force present there, UNMIS. This conflict was a clear demonstration of the AU's ability to function where the UN could not:

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the Sudanese government would only permit the AU force for several years, leaving the UN unable to assist directly.

Discussion Questions

1. When is the UN allowed to intervene in a civil conflict, and when is the UN obligated to do so?
2. What are the limits to UN mediation of a conflict, be it military, economic, or otherwise?
3. How will the UN monitor and protect refugees in a civil crisis, as well as ensure their return and establishment in a post conflict scenario?
4. How will the UN coordinate reconstruction in a post conflict area?
5. How will the UN monitor and administer elections in a post-conflict areas?
6. How will the UN manage social reconciliation in areas where conflict may have been happening for years? This includes the reintegration of combatants into civilian society.
7. How will peacekeeping operations be coordinated in view of the wider issue of social and infrastructure reconstruction

Additional Resources

Details on every UN intervention to date, and information on UN peacekeeping

<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/>

Overviews the problem, and compares different forms of interventions, and how they affect the nation

<http://r.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3484&context=etd>

Compares successes and failures of various interventions

<http://unitingforpeace.com/resources/speeches/How%20effective%20is%20the%20UN.pdf>

An organization dedicated to improving peacekeeping operations. It has numerous reports of the problems UN missions face

<http://www.effectivepeacekeeping.org/>

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