The History of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations During the Cold War: 1945 to 1987

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FOREWORD

Given the resurgence of peacekeeping in the early 21st Century, it is relevant to deepen the knowledge and understanding of United Nations peacekeeping missions in the context of their origins and evolution. With the expanding size, scope, and complexity of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations in the immediate post-Cold War era, it is highly pertinent to review how peacekeeping was conducted during the Cold War, as these missions were fundamentally different to the way operations are conducted today. This review is even more relevant as a number of key Cold War missions are still ongoing as of 2006, three of which (the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force–UNDOF; the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon–UNIFIL; and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation–UNTSO) were directly in the path of the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. One other Cold War mission, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), was at the periphery of unfolding events in the region. Peacekeeping obviously did not occur in a vacuum and, thus, non-UN and UN-related activities that went on during the Cold War must also be considered in relation to actual UN peacekeeping operations to gain a full understanding of events.

It is important to gain a conceptual foundation and background in the history of UN Peacekeeping Operations by reviewing the historical, political, and diplomatic background that contributed to the evolution of peacekeeping operations in a general chronological order. Therefore, this course package begins with the genesis of peacekeeping and moves on to the Korean War. From there, the first Arab-Israeli war is discussed, in which the first true UN peacekeeping and observer missions were established. The course then goes on to discuss the missions in the late 1950s in Egypt and Congo (1960) and the resulting financial crisis they created that nearly led to the collapse of the UN. Subsequent lessons discuss the smaller missions conducted in Asia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. The course then refocuses on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the 1967 War, then stepping back briefly in time to 1964 and the inception of the mission in Cyprus. The course then returns to the Arab-Israeli conflict in Lebanon, which is the final mission of the Cold War era and offers a summary and conclusion of the effectiveness of peacekeeping during the first 45 years of peacekeeping. Overall, the study guide will familiarise the student with the significance of individual UN Peacekeeping Missions and the overall evolution and functioning of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations during the Cold War.

At the time of this writing, some of the missions were still ongoing. However, lessons have been written in the past tense, as mission mandates could be terminated by the time this course comes to print. I hope that the student will find this updated and enhanced course informative and interesting and that the knowledge gained will be of use in dealing with issues that face peacekeepers throughout the world.

Prof. Sunil V. Ram

July 2006
FORMAT OF STUDY

This course is designed for independent study at a pace determined by the student.

Course format and materials permit:

- MODULAR STUDY
- EASE OF REVIEW
- INCREMENTAL LEARNING

STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

The student is responsible for:

- Learning course material
- Completing the End-of-Course Examination
- Submitting the End-of-Course Examination

Please consult your enrolment confirmation email or the end of this course for examination submission instructions.
METHOD OF STUDY

The following are suggestions for how to proceed with this course. Though the student may have alternate approaches that are effective, the following hints have worked for many.

- Before you begin actual studies, first browse through the overall course material. Notice the lesson outlines, which give you an idea of what will be involved as you proceed.

- The material should be logical and straightforward. Instead of memorizing individual details, strive to understand concepts and overall perspectives in regard to the United Nations system.

- Set up guidelines regarding how you want to schedule your time.

- Study the lesson content and the learning objectives. At the beginning of each lesson, orient yourself to the main points. If you are able to, read the material twice to ensure maximum understanding and retention, and let time elapse between readings.

- When you finish a lesson, take the End-of-Lesson Quiz. For any error, go back to the lesson section and re-read it. Before you go on, be aware of the discrepancy in your understanding that led to the error.

- After you complete all of the lessons, take time to review the main points of each lesson. Then, while the material is fresh in your mind, take the End-of-Course Examination in one sitting.

- Your exam will be scored, and if you achieve a passing grade of 75 percent or higher, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. If you score below 75 percent, you will be given one opportunity to take a second version of the End-of-Course Examination.

- One note about spelling is in order. This course was written in English as it is used in the United Kingdom.

Note: The appendices located in the back of this course contain reference materials that may be useful to the student, including a list of acronyms used in this text, an acronym list of all peacekeeping operations, and mission data profiles of the missions discussed in this text, including basic facts, maps, and medals.
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LESSON 1

THE GENESIS OF PEACEKEEPING

1.1  Genesis of UN Peacekeeping Operations
1.2  UN Collective Security System
1.3  The Korean Crisis and Its Aftermath
1.4  Increasing the Role of the General Assembly
1.5  Summary
Lesson 1 provides a look at what the term peacekeeping meant in the original Charter, and how that definition evolved with changing circumstances. It discusses the original system of UN collective security and why it became inoperable. Lesson 1 also takes a look at the nature of the period known as the Cold War, a term reflecting the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The student becomes familiar with the impact of this rivalry on the operation of the United Nations and the subsequent evolution of peacekeeping missions and military observer missions. The lesson examines an initial regional conflict in Korea, how it played a major role in the re-evaluation of peacekeeping by the United Nations, and how it led to the increased role of the General Assembly in initiating peacekeeping measures.

The lesson describes the characteristics of peacekeeping missions, their chain of command, and their implementation, as well as the nature, duties, and roles of the countries and the forces that participate in these missions.

By the end of Lesson 1, the student should be able to meet the following objectives:

- Explain the original UN system of collective security as outlined in Chapters VI and VII of the Charter;
- Understand the impact of superpower rivalry in the evolution of peacekeeping operations;
- Explain what overall steps are taken to establish a mission, as well as the chain of responsibilities related to each step; and
- Identify and explain the early predecessor of peacekeeping operations, namely, the UN intervention in Korea and how it impacted UN policy towards international peacekeeping.
1.1 Genesis of UN Peacekeeping Operations

It has been argued by some historians that the origins of peacekeeping go as far back as the Delian League of ancient Greece in the fifth century, BCE. But, like the Delian League, on closer examination these examples of “proto” peacekeeping were clearly ordinary alliances that had little to do with ethical issues surrounding peace. From a western perspective, the closest example from history that first tried to personify what we see today as peacekeeping was initiated by the early medieval Catholic Church through its initiatives (the Peace of God and Truce of God) in the late tenth century to try and limit the spread of war. However, these ideals and some early attempts at arms control (i.e., the Second Lateran Council of 1139) were also initiated to allow the fury of interstate war in Europe to be directed at the Muslim-dominated Middle East.

A new and radical idea was offered in 1623 by Emeric Crucé. He argued that all the worlds’ leaders, including all those outside of traditional Europe, should be included in an alliance that tried to resolve international disputes through mediation at a world council held in a neutral location. Over the next few centuries, more substantive European attempts were made to peace-orientated agreements included the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Utrecht in 1713, Paris in 1763, and in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars the Concert of Europe in 1815-18. There were other attempts, but the first truly substantial system came into being after the horrors of World War I (1914-18). The League of Nations was the child of American President Woodrow Wilson, and it was an attempt at collective diplomacy and peace enforcement. It ultimately failed, but after the Second World War, the United Nations Organisation (UNO) became the mechanism to implement collective diplomacy and peace.

The founders of the United Nations had not foreseen the possibility of engaging in peacekeeping operations (PKOs); thus, PKOs are not mentioned at all in the original UN Charter. By definition, peacekeeping operations are essentially a practical mechanism used by the United Nations to contain international conflicts and to facilitate their settlement by peaceful means. However, tensions between the United States (U.S.) and the Soviet Union (USSR) emerged after World War II and significantly affected the operation of the UN. This was known as the Cold War. What we now call peacekeeping came about out of necessity and was essentially an improvisation to respond to the growing tensions between the superpowers (the U.S. and the USSR).

Under Article 25 of the Charter, Member States of the UN have agreed to “accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council” (SC). Therefore, under the Charter, the SC has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As a result of the increasing disagreement between the two superpowers, the original collective security system, which was based on peace enforcement by the SC and consensus by major powers, became unworkable. This led to the conception of PKOs. Early peacekeeping was a response to inter-state conflict, and ideally it was conceived as a non-violent use of military force in an effort to preserve peace between warring state actors. Peacekeeping fell between Chapter VI and VII of the UN Charter, and in the future it would be euphemistically referred to as “Chapter VI ½ operations.”
1.2 UN Collective Security System

The original system devised by the United Nations to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security is outlined in Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter. It was intended to provide a collective security system for Member Nations. Briefly, the original system was meant to function in the following manner:

**CHAPTER VI: PEACEFUL RESOLUTION**

When a dispute arises between two governments, the parties concerned are obligated under Chapter VI of the Charter to seek a solution by peaceful means, mainly by:

(a) Negotiation
(b) Conciliation
(c) Mediation
(d) Arbitration
(e) Peaceful settlement
(f) Resort to regional agencies or arrangements.

**CHAPTER VII: ENFORCEMENT MEASURES**

If the peaceful means fail and the dispute escalates into an armed conflict, then Chapter VII comes into play. Chapter VII constitutes the core of the UN Collective Security System. It provides that in the case of:

(a) A threat to the peace
(b) A breach of the peace
(c) An act of aggression

the Security Council may take enforcement measures to restore the situation. These enforcement measures are essentially:

(a) Arms embargoes
(b) Economic sanctions and, in the last resort,
(c) The use of force.

Plans for the use of force must be made by the Security Council with the assistance of the UN Military Staff Committee.
The five major powers, which played a key role in the creation of the United Nations, are Permanent Members of the SC, and each are endowed with the right of veto. These nations are China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (now Russia), the United Kingdom, and the United States. The same major powers also make up the Military Staff Committee. Thus, the Charter provisions on the collective use of force can be applied effectively only with their consent and with their continued cooperation. But because the Cold War broke out shortly after the establishment of the United Nations, these conditions could not be met due to the fact that the relations among the major powers, and especially between the two superpowers, became marred by mistrust and disagreement. This resulted in the SC having to resort to other means in which to preserve peace and stability. Thus, the mediation, conciliation, good offices of the Secretary-General, and ultimately peacekeeping became these other means during the Cold War. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had envisioned the SC’s Permanent Members as a team of “world policemen”; however, this never came to be. Instead, as peacekeeping evolved, peacekeeping troops were drawn on a voluntary basis from Member States.

Peacekeeping began with unarmed observers and then evolved into missions that had both armed peacekeepers and unarmed military observers. The classical model of Cold War peacekeeping evolved over the 1950s, when consent from the protagonists was required for peacekeeping intervention, impartiality was required from the deployed UN forces, and UN forces were only to resort to the use of arms in self-defence. There was only one instance during the Cold War in which the collective use of force was initiated under the Charter; this was the Korean Crisis in 1950.

1.3 The Korean Crisis and Its Aftermath

The Charter provisions on the collective use of force in Korea were invoked in a roundabout way. This occurred at the outset of the Korean crisis. When the North Korean army invaded South Korea in June 1950, the United States immediately brought the matter before the Security Council and proposed a series of draft resolutions.

It asked the Council to:

(a) Determine that the armed attack by North Korea was a breach of the peace;

(b) Call upon North Korea to withdraw its forces forthwith to the 38th parallel;

(c) Request Member States to provide military assistance to South Korea and make their military units available to a unified command under the United States; and

(d) Authorise the unified command to fly the United Nations flag.

"The official flag of the United Nations, now flying with national banners over the U.N. armed forces in action to restore the peace in Korea, is shown in this photograph. The background colour of the flag is the light blue associated with the U.N. since its early days, while the official United Nations seal in its centre is in white." (Quote from the original caption), New York, 1950.
These draft resolutions did not mention Chapter VII of the Charter.

At the time, the Soviet Union was boycotting the Security Council because of the question of the representation of China at the UN. In the absence of the Soviet Union, the United States draft resolutions were adopted and provided the basis to establish the United Nations Forces in Korea. When the Soviet Union realised the consequences of its boycott, it resumed its seat in the Security Council at the beginning of August 1950; after it returned, the Council could no longer take any action on the Korean crisis.

The UN Forces in Korea were not a peacekeeping operation in the way that a PKO is normally defined because:
- the forces there were not directed by the Secretary-General; and
- they used force.

Nor was it considered an enforcement operation under Chapter VII of the Charter, because:
- it was not under the control of the Security Council; and
- the Council’s enabling resolutions had not specifically invoked that Chapter.

It was a unique case made possible by the astonishing decision of the Soviet Union to stay away from the SC for six crucial weeks. The Soviet Union had boycotted the SC because the anti-communist government of Taiwan occupied the permanent SC seat held by China, instead of the mainland communist government. Why the Soviet Union waited that long to return to its seat on the SC remains one of the unresolved mysteries of the United Nations history.

1.4 Increasing the Role of the General Assembly

The repercussions of the Korean crisis led to a re-evaluation of the UN’s role in peacekeeping. It was undoubtedly the Korean experience that prompted the United States to seek to enhance the role of the General Assembly to maintain international peace and security. At the 1950 session of the General Assembly, the U.S. proposed a draft resolution to empower the Assembly to deal with matters in this field on an emergency basis. It proposed that if the Security Council failed to act because of the lack of unanimity among its Permanent Members, the General Assembly could then vote to take action. Despite the strong objection of the Soviet Union, the Assembly adopted this proposal, known as the “Uniting for Peace Resolution,” on 3 November 1950.
1.5 Summary

The Korean crisis and its aftermath highlighted the fact that the Charter provisions on the collective use of force, which were based solely on agreement between the five superpowers on the Security Council, were not applicable. It brought out the necessity for the United Nations to devise an alternative mechanism to restore peace in case of an outbreak of armed conflict. The United Nations peacekeeping operations were conceived and developed as this alternative mechanism. As further reading will show, PKOs were developed progressively and pragmatically, thanks to the vision and efforts of the successive Secretaries-General and other prominent internationalists, such as Ralph Bunche, Lester B. Pearson, and Brian Urquhart.
1. On a day-to-day basis, peacekeeping operations are directed by who?
   A. The General Assembly;
   B. The Secretary-General;
   C. Solely by the Commander of Operations;

2. The founders of the United Nations had not foreseen the possibility of engaging in what?
   A. Peacekeeping operations (PKOs);
   B. Conventional warfare;
   C. Development;
   D. Reconstruction.

3. When a dispute arises between two governments, which one of the following statements is true according to the UN Charter?
   A. Parties are not obligated to seek a resolution through any means;
   B. The Secretary-General establishes guidelines for its resolution under instructions from the General Assembly;
   C. The Security Council may invoke sanctions to induce parties to seek a peaceful resolution, and may invoke the use of force as a last resort;
   D. The UN Charter does not address disputes that arise between two governments.

4. Peacekeeping operations of the UN are outlined in:
   A. Chapter VI of the original Charter;
   B. Chapter VII of the original Charter;
   C. Chapters VI and VII of the original Charter;
   D. Not mentioned at all in the original Charter;

5. What does Chapter VII of the UN Charter constitute?
   A. The core of the UN Collective Security System;
   B. The secondary role of the Security Council;
   C. The primary rules of disengagement for the UN system;
   D. The operating rules for the General Assembly.

6. Military personnel who serve on UN peacekeeping operations:
A. Are provided only by the five members of the Security Council;
B. Always are conscripts who have been drafted by their nation;
C. Are permanent employees of the United Nations;
D. Are provided by Member States on a voluntary basis.

7. Why were the U.S. draft resolutions, that were the basis of the establishment of the United Nations Forces in Korea, adopted by the Security Council (SC)?
   A. There was full support from all the Permanent Members of the SC;
   B. The U.S. was able to pressure all the members of the SC to support the resolutions;
   C. At the time, the USSR was boycotting the SC because of the question of the representation of China at the UN;
   D. There was no clear understanding of the implications of the resolutions.

8. Why was Korea not considered an enforcement operation under Chapter VII of the Charter?
   A. It was not under the control of the Security Council;
   B. It did not have the full agreement of the Security Council;
   C. It was outside of the scope of the UN Charter as a whole;
   D. The Secretary-General did not endorse the mission.

9. The Korean experience prompted the United States to do what?
   A. Retrench its foreign policy and not support the UN;
   B. Enhance the role of the General Assembly to maintain international peace and security;
   C. Change the way vetoes worked in the Security Council;
   D. Modify the role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace.

10. The Korean crisis highlighted the need for the United Nations to devise what?
    A. An alternative mechanism to restore peace in case of an outbreak of armed conflict;
    B. A standing military force;
    C. A re-evaluation of superpower rivalry in the Security Council;
    D. A reduced role for Permanent Members in the Security Council.

**ANSWER KEY:**
1B, 2A, 3C, 4D, 5A, 6D, 7C, 8A, 9B, 10A