

**SOME PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING  
THE PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1 . While conducting research on a preliminary study of the institutional adequacy of the United Nations for peace-keeping activities, certain ideas occurred to us which seemed to have the potential for improving the conduct of peace-keeping operations in the near future. We discussed these ideas with knowledgeable officials, including many from Member States, in New York, Geneva and Washington, and were encouraged to advance them for consideration as soon as possible.

2 . Accordingly, we have prepared the following note to the Secretary-General for consideration in the context of his vital study "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277).

3 . Admittedly, this procedure is a departure from the more research-oriented activities of the Joint Inspection Unit in that it is almost exclusively action-oriented<sup>1/</sup>. However, it is doubtful that time-consuming research is really needed in view of the aforementioned challenging analysis of the Secretary-General, the deliberations of the Security Council and the work of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations<sup>2/</sup>. Rather, we hope to be able to contribute in a modest way to an ongoing improvement in the conduct of the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations.

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<sup>1/</sup>This approach has been advocated in Fifth Committee discussions and resolutions and raised during the joint JIU/ACABQ meetings in June 1992. See resolution 45/237, par.2(e).

<sup>2/</sup>See the latter Committee's most recent report (A/47/253).

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Managerial recommendations

1. That the Secretary-General designate a financial co-ordinator for each peace-keeping operation who will be allocated all United Nations financing for the operation and be personally responsible for its expenditure and accounting, including the economic distribution or safe storage of supplies and equipment remaining after the termination of an operation.
2. That the Secretary-General develop plans for creating, training and maintaining within the Secretariat teams possessing a proper balance of skills and available for rapid deployment in support of peace-keeping operations and that this additional cost be funded from the interest earned on the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund.

### B. Financial recommendations

3. That the Secretary-General propose to the General Assembly that the revolving Peace-keeping Reserve Fund he has recommended be capitalized out of existing and prospective peace-keeping surpluses (e.g., UNTAG and UNIIMOG) and supplemented by the net payments of all presently existing arrears (peace-keeping and regular budget), after the Working Capital Fund has been replenished, and existing obligations discharged.
4. That the Secretary-General consider modifying his budgeting for, and reporting on, peace-keeping operations in the direction of greater transparency and precision:
  - (a) By creating a single financial account for peace-keeping operations financed from assessments;

- (b) By issuing periodic status reports frequently and from the beginning of an operation and that these reports include all financial information including the payment or non-payment of assessments;
- (c) By requesting Internal Audit to report regularly on the state of peace-keeping finances and to monitor closing expenses and the disposition of resources;
- (d) By identifying all costs and funding related to peace-keeping operations, including those peace-keeping expenditures financed by the regular budget of the United Nations and those regular budget expenditures financed by peace-keeping funds.

C. Recommendations concerning contributions of troops

- 5. That the Secretary-General propose to the General Assembly (or decide himself) to put peace-keeping forces together to the maximum extent possible from troops which are provided without reimbursement. Similarly, the Secretary-General should attempt to obtain troop placement services and equipment expenses without cost to the United Nations. The donors in all three cases should, however, be credited with the value of such voluntary contributions against the totality of their peace-keeping assessments, not just those for a given operation. Any excess should be recorded as a voluntary peace-keeping contribution on their part.
- 6. That the Secretary-General propose to the General Assembly that the normal rotation period for troops contributed by Member States be extended from six months to one year and that he provide the General Assembly with an estimate, as realistic as possible, of the savings this proposal would realize.

### III. THOUGHTS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS<sup>3/</sup>

4 . Perhaps the primary ingredient of good management is a clearly defined, visible and thoroughly understood spectrum of accountability at each managerial level. By this measure, once past the clear responsibility of the Secretary-General as "the chief administrative officer" of the United Nations (Charter: Article 97), there is no hierarchical structure in the United Nations for managing peace-keeping operations in their entirety. Rather, political, financial, humanitarian, logistical, planning and budgeting functions are divided among United Nations managers at various levels<sup>3/</sup> below the Secretary-General.

5 . In an early draft of this Note, Inspectors considered the advisability of recommending that the Secretary-General create a rational hierarchical structure for all aspects of peace-keeping operations which would include the various components of a typical operation under one head who would be solely accountable for results to the Secretary-General, and through him to the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly. Upon further reflection, however, Inspectors decided against such a recommendation principally because the partial restructuring of the United Nations which it would imply did not take account of the other responsibilities of the United Nations. The task of the Secretary-General in administering the United Nations cannot be concerned exclusively with the peace-keeping function. Rather, in managing and restructuring the Organization he must take into account all of the purposes of the United Nations as set forth in Article I of the Charter.

6 . However, in the opinion of Inspectors, there is a managerial action open to the Secretary-General which would be conducive to greater accountability for peace-keeping operations and which would create a pragmatic fiscal mechanism for advancing co-ordination among the various elements involved in such operations. Thus, Inspectors recommend that the Secretary-General designate for each peace-keeping operation a financial co-ordinator who would control and disburse all United Nations funds pertaining to the operation.

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<sup>3/</sup> Inspectors will use the definition of peace-keeping contained in the Secretary-General's annual report (A/47/1, paragraph 110): "the employment of troops under United Nations command in non-violent operations, with the consent of parties to a conflict, for the purpose of maintaining stability in numerous areas of tension around the world."

Creation of such a focal point of accountability at the critical funding level would provide an opportunity to enforce co-ordination through disbursal or withholding of funds and would center responsibility at a clearly identifiable level below the Secretary-General. The proposed financial co-ordinator would be responsible for the management of funds, including accounting for their disbursement and the disposition of supplies, equipment and other resources purchased with these moneys.

7 . Should the Secretary-General accept this recommendation, precise terms of reference for the financial co-ordinator would of course have to be developed and necessary changes made to the Financial Regulations and Rules. Moreover, these modifications would have to set forth the conditions under which decisions within the competence of the financial co-ordinator could be over-ridden by designated senior officials (presumably at the Under-Secretary-General level) and provide for maximum transparency to such an over-ride. Perhaps this could be best handled on a case-by-case basis through explicit delegation from the Secretary-General or, even better, by an over-ride by the Secretary-General himself upon the recommendation of the appropriate senior official. In any event, the ultimate authority and responsibility would belong to the Secretary-General.

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8 . As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report on the work of the Organization (A/47/1), the civilian component of peace-keeping operations has expanded greatly in recent years.<sup>4/</sup> Traditionally, most of these civilian peace-keepers have been members of the United Nations Secretariat who have volunteered for this duty. Although one can, and should, respect the spirit of these volunteers, it is a sad fact that with the exception of repeaters (i.e., those who have previously served), the Secretariat staff selected have virtually no experience in peace-keeping operations. Neither are they given any training prior to being sent to the field in those functions unique to peace-keeping they may be asked to perform.

9 . This distressing training deficiency is well recognized in the Organization. One experienced official has recently called for a United Nations training programme to create and maintain cadres of interagency, multidisciplinary units ready for rapid deployment and instant effectiveness in support of peace-keeping and related operations.<sup>5/</sup> Other elements of the United Nations system have recognized the importance of pre-deployment training and rapid readiness in their fields of competence. Thus, UNHCR has spent time, energy and resources in training emergency programme staff which can be dispatched on UNHCR missions in less than forty-eight hours. And the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has the beginnings of a rapid deployment system for disaster relief activities. But planning for missions in the United Nations is still at an unacceptably early stage although the need for it is widely perceived. The Secretary-General himself in his Agenda for Peace (A/47/277) has stated (paragraph 52) that "special personnel procedures, including incentives, should be instituted to permit the rapid transfer of Secretariat staff members to service peace-keeping operations."

10 . It is quite clear that the major impediment to the institution of a proper peace-keeping training regimen is the lack of money. Training in most bureaucracies has great difficulty in competing against other claimants for funding because the effects of training deficiencies are not immediately apparent. It is for this reason that Inspectors have searched for an

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<sup>4/</sup> Paragraph 19 states that from 877 in 1987 the civilian component has increased to 9461 as of August 1992.

<sup>5/</sup> Antonio Donini "Fonctionnaires sans frontières" UN SPECIAL No. 499 (June 1992), pp. 7-9.



off-budget source of funds which when once earmarked could be used to sustain peace-keeping training. Thus, Inspectors propose that the costs of creating, training and maintaining peace-keeping rapid deployment teams be defrayed from interest earned by the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund proposed by the Secretary-General. This proposal is based on a number of assumptions: first, that the Fund recommended by the Secretary-General (A/47/1, paragraph 54(a)) is in fact established, secondly, that if established it will prove so useful that it will become permanent and thirdly, that the amount of the principal and the rate of interest will be sufficient to provide an acceptable level of readiness. Inspectors would hope for an annual income from interest of between \$2 and \$2.5 million which would be enough for a sustainable training programme.

11 . If the above assumptions are not realized, the programme would necessarily have to depend on the vagaries of a share in regular peace-keeping budgets or support from voluntary contributions. Inspectors do not rank highly the prospects that either of these alternative sources would be forthcoming in sufficient and regular amounts.

12 . However, even if the financing is assured there are personnel management problems involved in the creation of rapid deployment teams. The Secretary-General has addressed these problems when he has alluded to the need for incentives to permit the rapid transfer of Secretariat staff to service peace-keeping operations. Incentives would certainly be necessary to protect the career opportunities of staff who are subject to being wrenched from their regular jobs at a moment's notice. Managers will be rightly apprehensive about entrusting important responsibilities to staff whose occasional, or even frequent, disappearance is likely. And without important responsibilities, staff careers will suffer. Moreover, managers responsible for the effective operation of their units will certainly wish to discourage their most reliable staff from acquiring a peace-keeping competence while encouraging the absence of personnel who can be most readily spared. There is, therefore a danger of negative selection working against the creation of competent capable rapid deployment teams. Inspectors hope that the personnel managers of the United Nations will be able to recommend incentives capable of resolving these problems.

13 . On balance, however, and despite the financial and managerial difficulties noted above, Inspectors recommend early action by the Secretary-General to create, train and maintain within the Secretariat skilled and specialized teams capable of rapid deployment on peace-keeping missions.

IV. THOUGHTS ON THE FINANCING OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

14 . Both the current Secretary-General and his predecessor have stressed repeatedly the difficulties of initiating peace-keeping operations without adequate and timely financing and have proposed a revolving Peace-keeping Reserve Fund of \$50 million as one step toward ameliorating this problem. In the opinion of Inspectors as well, there is an urgent need for such a revolving fund, regularly replenished to maintain its capitalized level. As with most other worthwhile United Nations activities the problem is not with the concept but with the financing.

15 . In considering where the money for the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund could be obtained, Inspectors were bemused by the arrears figures for September, 1992, reported by the Secretary-General in his annual report: unpaid assessed contributions of \$908.5 million, unpaid peace-keeping contributions of \$844.4 million. Although much of the unpaid peace-keeping arrears is owed to troop contributors, claims against the regular budget arrears amount to substantially less than the amounts owed by Member States. True, the Working Capital Fund must be replenished at its present level of \$100 million or its recommended higher level of \$250 million. Also, the remainder of 1992 must be funded and debts incurred to other funds paid back. But after all this is done the United Nations stands to reap a substantial windfall upon the repayment of regular budget arrears. What better disposition of such funds, if in fact they are forthcoming, than to capitalize the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund? Indeed, a decision of the General Assembly to that effect might well stimulate the payment of arrears by major contributors with a particular interest in United Nations peace-keeping.

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16 . Virtually every General Assembly in recent years has witnessed calls by delegations of Member States for greater transparency and better access to information concerning peace-keeping operations. Financial information was particularly desired so that Member States could evaluate the validity of budgetary presentations. Inspectors believe that the advent of a new dynamic Secretary-General affords an opportunity to meet these concerns by advancing the peace-keeping financial process towards greater clarity, more meaningful detail, more intrusive control and greater comprehensiveness.

17 . An initial step would be to examine the feasibility of creating a single financial account for all peace-keeping operations financed from assessments. In the interest of simplicity, it would probably be best to try the single account approach on future operations. If the concept proved desirable, pre-existing accounts could be considered for inclusion. Such an inclusion could be most beneficial on the contributions side because there would be a clear advantage in representing the obligations of Member States as being to a generalized United Nations Peace-keeping Fund rather than to specific peace-keeping operations, some of which some members have hesitated to support. Whether for past, present or future operations, support for a generalized obligation implies support for the peace-keeping machinery of the United Nations; support for individual peace-keeping operations are more likely to reflect political preferences -- this despite the equal legal obligation incurred in either case. Thus, a likely advantage of a single financial account -- in particular, a single peace-keeping billing -- would be to make it easier politically for Member States to pay their peace-keeping assessments.

18 . Three additional recommendations would also assist Member States to monitor and critique intelligently the peace-keeping accounts of the United Nations. Inspectors propose firstly that the Secretary-General increase the frequency of his periodical status reports, that he begin reporting promptly at the outset of an operation and that his reports include all financial information including the payment or non-payment of assessed contributions. Such a comprehensive and regular reporting schedule would, Inspectors believe, do much to allay the expressed concerns of Member States.

19 . Secondly, Inspectors recommend that the Secretary-General strengthen the internal controls of the United Nations by instructing Internal Audit to report frequently and in detail on the state of peace-keeping finances and to monitor with particular attention the closing costs of an operation including the disposition of supplies and equipment.

20 . Thirdly, Inspectors recommend that the Secretary-General, in his reporting on peace-keeping expenses, identify clearly sources of funding with particular attention to those peace-keeping expenditures which are financed out of the regular budget of the United Nations and those regular budget costs which have been defrayed by peace-keeping funds. An example of the latter occurs frequently when Secretariat personnel volunteer and are accepted for peace-keeping assignments but are not replaced. The result is that the peace-keeping budget pays the full costs of the seconded employee and the regular budget receives the windfall of the funds appropriated for his position.

21 . Although none of the foregoing three recommendations are earth-shaking, their implementation would assist Member States to take informed decisions on the proper expenditure of funds, the allocation of resources and the relationship between the regular budget of the United Nations and the budgets of peace-keeping operations.

V. THOUGHTS ON TROOP CONTRIBUTIONS

22 . Major elements in the budget of many peace-keeping operations are reimbursement for the costs of troops provided by Member States and payment for their transport and equipment. The history of these expenditures is inconsistent: for example, much of the time the original placement of troops has been accomplished without cost to the Organization. Occasionally, gifts of equipment have been received. And, although obligations for the reimbursement of troops have been incurred since 1973, military observers have not been included. Most recently, the Secretary-General welcomed the indication of some Member States that they were willing to provide military personnel, equipment and logistic support to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) "at no cost to the United Nations." The Secretary-General's favorable recommendation to the Security Council was based explicitly on this assumption.<sup>6/</sup>

23 . Thus, one can see a checquered pattern of reimbursement practice, based, very likely, on the political possibilities at any given time. On that assumption and the conviction that the current political environment is peculiarly favorable to the cost-free provision of troops, placement services and compatible items of equipment, the authors of this Note recommend that the Secretary-General state to the General Assembly his intention to seek such donations to the Organization at the outset and at every stage of current and subsequent peace-keeping operations. (Thought might also be given to soliciting such contributions retrospectively through the cancellation of obligations of the United Nations to Member States which were incurred for past peace-keeping operations).

24 . In the interest of equity and to make solicitation more acceptable, the General Assembly might wish to authorize the crediting of such contributions against the peace-keeping assessments of the donors.

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<sup>6/</sup> Document S/24540 of 10 September 1992.

25 . If Inspectors are correct in their conviction that appropriate donors to peace-keeping operations can be found under current political conditions, there would appear to be but one objection to this proposal. Certain Member States would no doubt be financially unable to offer troops, services and equipment and would thus be excluded from peace-keeping operations. But this condition would be no more discriminatory than their de facto exclusion from contributions to humanitarian, developmental, scientific or any other activity of the United Nations subject to voluntary contributions. Moreover, one could envisage situations in which major contributors, unable or unwilling to provide troops, would nevertheless welcome the opportunity to assist financially in making troop contributions of less wealthy Members cost-free to the United Nations.

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26 . A final recommendation of Inspectors in this Note is that the Secretary-General propose the extension of the rotation period for peace-keeping troops from six months to one year. Not only would this practice save substantial sums (estimated at \$15 million per annum for a current set of peace-keeping operations) but, even more importantly it would improve the effectiveness of peace-keeping troops by a factor of 25 per cent. On a six-months rotation, troops typically lose one month in orientation and acclimatisation and one month in preparing for departure -- four effective months in six. On a one-year rotation and the same loss of two months, the troops are effective ten months of twelve, a gain of two months per year.