

A United Nations Assessment Project Study

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EXPANDING THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL: A RECIPE FOR MORE SOMALIAS, MORE GRIDLOCK, AND LESS DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

The tragedy and disaster in Somalia—where 26 American soldiers have been killed in a misguided mission of nation-building—is the inevitable result of the Clinton Administration's post-Cold War vision. Clinton and his aides viewed Somalia as a laboratory where their theories of a new kind of "peacemaking" mission would be proved.¹ Unfortunately, despite the failure in Somalia, Clinton and his foreign policy advisers refuse to revise the underlying policies and assumptions that caused the U.S. to follow the United Nations in taking sides in Somalia's civil war.

One of these policy assumptions is that the U.N.'s role in establishing international security should be greatly increased. As part of its campaign to boost the U.N., the Clinton Administration has proposed an expansion of the Security Council's permanent membership beyond its current five members.² The purpose of this change is to make the Security Council more representative of Third World interests.

But adding more countries to the Security Council will dilute American influence. Every country currently on the Security Council pursues its own goals and self-interests. More countries on the Security Council would mean a greater divergence of goals and thus more gridlock. Moreover, because some of the new members inevitably will be dictatorships, and possibly hostile to the United States, an expanded Security Council will be more likely to oppose American values and interests.

Overall, the Clinton policy toward the U.N. threatens to entangle America in costly and unwinnable wars that do not advance the interests of the United States. President Clinton is

1 Thomas Lippman and Barton Gellman, "A Humanitarian Gesture Turns Deadly," *The Washington Post*, October 10, 1993, p. A1.

2 The permanent members of the Security Council are the United States, Russia, China, France, and Great Britain.

exacerbating the problem by calling for an expanded and more powerful Security Council. To avoid entangling the U.S. in failed U.N. peacekeeping operations, Clinton should:

- ✗ **Resist the idea that expanding the permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council will enhance world peace.** Letting more countries onto the Security Council as permanent members makes it more likely that aggressive dictatorships like Iran and Libya will become members and will use the Security Council to undermine world peace.
- ✗ **Be cautious in expanding the peacekeeping role of the Security Council.** A larger Security Council would be less effective. It also would reduce U.S. influence in the U.N.
- ✗ **Rely less on the Security Council, and more on strategic alliances, to secure American interests.** Peacekeeping operations administered by U.S.-led regional coalitions are preferable to ones inspired and led by the U.N. itself.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE CLINTON FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA

In September, the Clinton Administration explained its vision for the world. In a series of speeches by the President, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, U.N. Permanent Representative Madeleine Albright, and Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the Clinton team expressed its collective belief that the U.S. does not face a serious enemy. The biggest threat to America, they say, comes from chaos, ethnic wars, and aggressive dictatorships.³

At the National War College, Albright said that “in today’s global village, chaos is an infection.” If the infection is not contained, her reasoning goes, then it will eventually destabilize one country after another, threatening trade and world peace. The Clinton policy thus puts a new twist in the Cold War “domino theory.” Instead of communism threatening world stability, the virus today is vaguely defined as wars and chaos.

To contain this chaos, Clinton wants to “enlarge” the number of free market democracies in the world. That was the theme of a speech given by Lake on September 21 at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C. In that speech Lake theorized that America is safest when the world is filled with democratic, free market countries. Danger comes from non-democratic, aggressive dictatorships. Lake believes that “our own safety is shaped by the character of foreign regimes.”⁴

To enlarge the number of free market democracies, Lake proposed four strategies: 1) to strengthen the community of major market democracies; 2) to foster and consolidate new democracies and market economies; 3) to counter the aggression—and support the

3 "Address by the President to the 48th Session of the United Nations General Assembly," September 27, 1993; Secretary of State Warren Christopher, "Building Peace in the Middle East," speech at Columbia University, September 20, 1993; Madeleine Albright, "Remarks to the National War College," September 23, 1993; Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," remarks at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, September 21, 1993.

4 Lake, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

liberalization—of states hostile to democracy and markets; and 4) to pursue the Administration's humanitarian agenda.⁵

Increasing Cooperation. One place this strategy will be carried out is at the United Nations Security Council. As the main security arm of the U.N., the Security Council figures highly in the Clinton Administration's new strategy of democratic expansion. An important assumption is that the U.S. must increase cooperation with other nations in the U.N. Peter Tarnoff, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, was quoted as saying that America under Clinton will resist taking the lead in military missions because America lacks the "leverage," "influence," and "inclination."⁶ From now on, outside of directly defending U.S. territory, the United States will not act alone militarily. Thus, under the Clinton criteria, unilateral military actions like those that occurred in Panama in 1989 and Grenada in 1983 would not have happened. Instead, the U.S. would wait for international approval from the U.N. and take action only in partnership with other nations. At the same time, the U.S. would participate in multilateral forces, but it would not act alone in coming to the aid of other countries such as Bosnia or Somalia.

The Clinton team apparently hopes that this brand of multilateral interventionism will begin a new era in world history. As Lake told the Johns Hopkins audience, he "hope[s] that the habit of multilateralism may one day enable the rule of law to play a far more civilizing role in the conduct of nations, as envisioned by the founders of the United Nations."⁷ Morton Halperin, Clinton's nominee for the newly created post of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Democracy and Peacekeeping, supports something called an "international guarantee."⁸ Under this plan, America would promise to allow the use of American troops to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions aimed at restoring or establishing constitutional democracies. This guarantee would help protect threatened democracies from aggression or rebellion. And, according to Halperin, it could even be used to assist self-proclaimed democratic rebels against dictatorships.⁹

Lending Forces, Sharing Intelligence. The degree to which the U.S. plans to depend on the U.N. to carry out this multilateral policy of enlargement is found in various drafts of a secret White House document called Presidential Decision Directive-13 (PDD-13). Current drafts of PDD-13 call for U.N. military intervention in a wide range of circumstances, including when a country undergoes "a sudden and unexpected interruption of established democracy or gross violation of human rights."¹⁰ When that occurs, PDD-13 calls for American troops to be placed under the control of a U.N. commander to do whatever is necessary to fulfill U.N. Security Council resolutions. This could include fighting a war. To help the U.N., American intelligence will be shared with the U.N. and with those nations lending forces to the military operation. PDD-13 also calls for America to pay for the U.N.'s military headquarters. To cover the costs of the U.N. military operation, PDD-13 recommends a tax on international air travel, arms sales, and telephone calls.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

6 Martin Peretz, "From Sarajevo to Jerusalem," *The New Republic*, September 6, 1993, p. 21.

7 Lake, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

8 Morton Halperin, "Guaranteeing Democracy," *Foreign Policy* Summer 1993, p. 105.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Memorandum to the Secretary of State, et al. from Anthony Lake, "Draft PDD on Peacekeeping," September 22, 1993, Annex I.

In a speech to the U.N. General Assembly on September 27, President Clinton publicly stated his support for the principles of PDD-13: "We support the creation of a genuine U.N. peacekeeping headquarters with a planning staff, with access to timely intelligence, with a logistics unit that can be deployed on a moment's notice, and a modern operations center with global communications."¹¹

His Administration has already voted in the Security Council to fund seven U.N. military missions: Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, former Soviet Georgia, Liberia, and two in Rwanda.¹² The U.S. is one of the nations contributing troops to the U.N. operations in Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti.

THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL AND MILITARY OPERATIONS

The Security Council consists of fifteen member nations. Five of these are permanent members: the United States, Russia, China, France, and Great Britain. The other ten are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.

During the Cold War, military missions approved by the Security Council rarely engaged in fighting. They were mainly limited to monitoring cease-fires and serving as buffers between enemies like Israel and Egypt or India and Pakistan. As the Cold War wound down, however, U.N. peacekeeping expanded. For example, U.N. forces demobilized the contras in Nicaragua, supervised the transition of Namibia from South African rule to independence, and monitored human rights abuses in El Salvador.¹³

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.N. has become even more ambitious. From February 1992 until May 1993, it supervised the government of Cambodia while organizing an election in that country. That operation required 22,000 personnel, including 15,900 troops, and cost almost \$2 billion. The Security Council, however, hit its apex during the 1991 Persian Gulf War when it was given a high-profile role of issuing resolutions and making demands of Saddam Hussein.

The Albright Plan. Because the Clinton Administration endorsed a more activist U.N., it has endorsed the idea of expanding the permanent membership of the Security Council. U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright believes that the Security Council should more closely resemble the mix of U.N. member nations. Specifically, she hopes to see more representatives from Third World states on the Security Council. According to one government official, Albright's goal is "to produce a 'diverse' Security Council which is more attuned to Third World needs, is not dominated by white First World states, and transforms the United States into a caring and sensitive world citizen rather than a 'domineering' world leader."¹⁴

11 Clinton, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

12 The first mission, a contingent of 81 troops to monitor the Rwanda/Uganda border, will be in addition to another force of as many as 2,500 troops to aid in the transition to democracy.

13 For more information on peacekeeping, see Andrew J. Cowin, "Expanding United Nations Peacekeeping Role Poses Risks for America," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 917, October 13, 1992.

14 "The Tarnoff Doctrine at the UN," an undated paper by a foreign policy government official who wishes to remain unnamed.

The first step in Albright's strategy to expand the Security Council has already been taken. In a June speech to the Foreign Policy Association, Albright endorsed permanent membership on the Security Council for Germany and Japan. In so doing, she now has two allies who also want to enlarge the Security Council. Albright apparently knows that it will be impossible for Germany and Japan to join the Security Council without the addition of between four and fifteen other countries, most of which will be Third World countries.

No changes in Security Council membership can be made without the support of the Third World countries in the U.N. Seats can be added to the Security Council only by amending the U.N. Charter. Amendments require a "yes" vote from two-thirds of the General Assembly, or 123 countries. The Third World bloc consists of 139 states and can prevent or assure passage.¹⁵

Third World Complaints. Security Council representation is very important to Third World diplomats. Since 1963, when the Security Council last expanded from eleven to its present fifteen members, the U.N. has grown from 113 countries to 184. Third World diplomats frequently charge that a failure to expand the Security Council commensurately is anti-democratic and underrepresents the interests of their countries.

For example, Ambassador Chinmaya Gharekhan of India argues that "Wider representation in the Security Council is a must, if it is to ensure its moral sanction and political effectiveness."¹⁶ Ronaldo Sardenberg, Ambassador from Brazil, predicts that "A more representative and balanced composition will inevitably enhance the Council's authority."¹⁷ The government of Guatemala submitted its opinion in writing to the U.N., stating, "For Council resolutions to be fully binding, they must reflect the position of nations both large and small, those with nuclear weapons and those without."¹⁸

Some of the most enthusiastic supporters of expanding the Security Council are the most anti-democratic and anti-American countries in the world. For example, Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Vietnam want to enlarge the Security Council. Libyan Ambassador Ali Ahmed Elhouderi asserts that Security Council resolutions "cannot be satisfactory unless they are adopted through a wider participation in a Security Council which is more representative of the family of nations."¹⁹ The Ambassador from Cuba supports expanding the Security Council because of "the need to democratize international organizations."²⁰ Perhaps most ironic, the former president of Nigeria, Ibrahim Babangida, who refused to turn over power to a freely elected leader (but was later overthrown in a military coup), insists that "The logic of democracy cannot be confined within the borders of individual states, but must, of necessity, be applicable to the operation of international organizations."²¹

15 The countries that vote for changing the Charter must put the changes through the treaty ratification process at home. In America, the U.S. Senate must vote to ratify the change.

16 General Assembly document A/47/PV.69, 12/10/92, p. 15.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

18 General Assembly document A/48/264, September 20, 1993, p. 44.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

21 A/46/PV.22, p. 54-55.

REASONS FOR NOT EXPANDING THE SECURITY COUNCIL

There are five reasons why the U.N. Security Council should not be expanded

Reason #1: It would violate the Clinton Administration's strategy of enlarging democracy around the world. Albright's proposals to increase the permanent membership the Security Council are at odds with the Administration's goal of democratic "enlargement." Most countries at the U.N. are hostile to the free market; some are dictatorships. One hundred and eleven countries can be classified as dictatorships or as only partly free. Expanding the Security Council would give more of those countries a greater voice in decisions about world peace.

Reason #2: Rogue nations might be strengthened and legitimized. More important, adding seats to the Security Council means that a higher percentage of U.N. members will sit on the Security Council. Today, one out of twelve countries sits on the Security Council. The Albright plan means that as many as one out of seven U.N. members would sit on the Council. Doing this increases the chances that rogue nations like Libya, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Sudan, or Syria will get a turn as a member of the Council. Since the Clinton Administration proposes sharing intelligence with the U.N. to improve its peacekeeping operations, expanding the Security Council would make it more likely that anti-American nations could get their hands on sensitive information crucial to defending U.S. national security.

Reason #3: Decision-making at the Security Council would become more difficult. Security Council resolutions require a three-fifths majority and can be vetoed by any permanent member. A bigger Security Council means that more countries will have to approve each resolution. More permanent members increase the likelihood of a veto, and more non-permanent members makes it more likely that resolutions will need to be watered down to achieve compromise. According to John Bolton, the Assistant Secretary of State responsible for coordinating U.N. and American diplomacy during the Gulf War, even with just fifteen Security Council members, it was hard to get the U.N. to act effectively. The Albright plan would make matters even worse. Says Bolton: "the complexity of negotiations in the Council does increase geometrically with the addition of new members, especially permanent ones."²²

Reason #4: The likelihood of more failed U.N. military operations would increase. The U.N. has a poor record of stopping wars. The U.N. has taken the lead in three small-scale wars since 1960: the Congo from 1960 to 1964, Bosnia since 1992, and Somalia since 1992. All three were fiascos.²³ In the Congo for instance, 234 U.N. soldiers were killed and the operation cost over \$400 million (\$2 bil-

²² John Bolton, "No Expansion for U.N. Security Council," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 26, 1993, p. 21.

²³ The U.N. has been involved in two full-scale wars—Korea and the Gulf War—but those efforts were really run by the U.S. with the U.N.'s blessing.

lion in 1992 dollars). But a year after the U.N. left, a dictator took power and still runs the country today. As for Bosnia, the U.N. has played a tragi-comic role in announcing dozens of cease-fires that are later broken. Despite U.N. presence, the war goes on and will probably be decided by the military power of the combatants rather than the negotiating prowess of the U.N.

Of course, the most recent U.N. fiasco has been in Somalia. The U.S. involvement in Somalia is a direct result of a failed U.N. operation. At first the U.N. operation in Somalia relied on troops from other countries, like Pakistan. But when it became clear they could not handle the job, George Bush sent 19,000 American troops in December 1992 to feed the Somalis, at a cost of \$800 million to the U.S. In May 1993, the U.S. pulled out, leaving behind a small contingent of troops for emergencies. By August it had become clear that the U.N. could not handle the operation, and again requested help from the Americans. That led to the tragic firefight in Mogadishu where eighteen Americans died and 75 were wounded.

If the Security Council is expanded, more countries will be able to apply greater pressure on the U.N. to participate in Somalia-type operations. And, of course, when these operations fail, the United States will likely be called upon to commit troops, as it was in Somalia.

In her September speech at the National War College, Ambassador Albright said that future peacekeeping missions “will lift from the shoulders of American servicemen and servicewomen and the taxpayers a great share of the burden of collective security operations around the globe.”²⁴ In fact, the exact opposite has occurred.

Reason #4: Cost will not decrease, as Clinton promises, but increase. Contrary to Albright’s theory, the U.N. has not lifted the burden off American taxpayers. In fact, it has increased the burden tremendously, costing the U.S. \$1.5 billion in the last year.

PROTECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The Clinton Administration’s policy of expanding the permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council will dilute America’s effectiveness at the U.N., raise the chances of unwise U.S. involvement in failed peacekeeping operations, and enhance the prestige of non-democratic regimes in the U.N. Thus, to avoid these problems, the U.S. should:

- 1) Resist the idea that expanding the permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council will enhance world peace.**

The United Nations has 184 members. These include countries like Iraq and North Korea which have been at war with the U.S. in the past and are today considered to be very hostile to America and her interests. Other U.N. members such as Cuba, Iran, Libya, Sudan, and Syria are on the State Department’s list of terrorist nations. Dozens of other

24 Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

countries, perhaps a majority of the Third World bloc, are less than friendly to the U.S. When they negotiate on issues of war and peace, their primary goal is often to embarrass the U.S. or to receive expensive concessions for their support. An expanded Security Council makes it more likely that the U.S. will have to negotiate with these potentially hostile and obstructive countries to achieve Security Council support for U.S. policies.

2) Be cautious in expanding the peacekeeping role of the Security Council.

The war record of the U.N. and the Security Council is dismal. The small-scale wars it organized in the Congo, Bosnia, and Somalia became fiascos. The only effective U.N. wars have been fought largely by the U.S., in the Persian Gulf and in Korea. When the U.N. attempts a war without American support, it fails.

The U.N. has no magical formula for enforcing peace throughout the world. With so many nations, agendas, and national interests in the U.N., there is bound to be a clash of goals. The Security Council may be able to improve international security in some instances, but making it the center of decision-making for maintaining global security is a mistake.

3) Rely less on the Security Council, and more on strategic alliances, to secure American interests.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the Clinton policy is that it relies on the U.N. to help defend America's interests. American interests are best defended by America and her allies.

If American interests are threatened, the worst way to protect them is to try to achieve consensus at the U.N. This world body is made up of nations that have little in common with the United States. It would make more sense to find countries that share America's goals, and then share the defense burden with them—as the U.S. did with NATO during the Cold War. That will give America more control over the alliances it enters into, and will not risk America's future on the array of nations that may be sitting on the Security Council at the time a crisis occurs. Of course, at times America may wish to seek the blessing of the U.N. for some military operation, but it should do so only if the U.S. and its allies are taking the lead, and if this is the best way to advance U.S. interests.

CONCLUSION

President Clinton supports an expanded Security Council because he believes that it will give greater legitimacy to Security Council decisions. A stronger and more independent Security Council, the President assumes, will better protect American interests. This assumption is wrong. A larger and more independent Security Council will not only be more ineffective, it will increase the likelihood that America will be dragged into dangerous conflicts that have no bearing on protecting the national interest.

Applying the principles of affirmative action at the U.N. is profoundly misguided. Trying to get a better representative mix on the Security Council will not produce fewer wars or strengthen American security. Many new Security Council members will have different interests and goals from the United States. Many will be opposed not only to the U.S., but to freedom and democracy.

In a world where too many nations are dictatorships, and too many people live in poverty because of oppressive regimes, the Clinton policy makes little sense. Expanding the Security Council certainly will not help America. By giving more power to dictators or oligarchs, it will not benefit the rest of the world either.

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