An Examination Of The Effectiveness Of The United Nations At Protecting The Interests Of Smaller Nations Within A Realist Unipolar World

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INTRODUCTION

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the nature of great power politics has changed dramatically. One of the most important changes that has occurred during the post-Cold War period is that there has been a steady shift towards a unipolar power structure. This change brings many challenges to international organizations such as the United Nations, which are dependant on cooperation and collaboration between nations in order to function effectively. In this paper, I intend to examine specifically whether or not the United Nations can effectively protect the security (and other) interests of smaller nations[1].

This particular question is of heightened relevance today because of the failed diplomacy preceding the current United States-led occupation of Iraq. Contemporary literature points to the inefficacy of the United Nations in resolving the Iraq issue diplomatically. Today, there are few who would vouch for the United Nations' effectiveness. However, contemporary opinion often draws on empirical observations to make their claims, without considering the wide variety of problems that the United Nations attempts to tackle (other than the provision of collective security), such as peacekeeping operations, economic forums, and health taskforces.

Often, the baseline that is used to judge the success or failure of the United Nations is whether or not it can credibly provide collective security. In today's unipolar world, many theorists (particularly those who subscribe the realist worldview) claim that

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[1] A formal definition of the term 'smaller nations' will be forthcoming.

the United Nations, as is, will be unable to contain hegemons in a unipolar world, and will therefore become an ineffective body with respect to providing collective security, and therefore by extension will be unable to protect the interests of smaller nations.

It is important to realise that following the end of the Cold War, the United Nations has been able to significantly expand its subsidiary roles, and has significantly increased the number of peacekeeping and peacemaking[2] operations it undertakes, many of which have been successful, and others not. In my paper, I will examine not only whether or not the United Nations can fulfil its traditional role of facilitating collective security, but also whether or not it can successfully fulfil the new roles that it has undertaken, such as these peacekeeping and peacemaking operations, which I will use as a litmus test of the United Nations' effectiveness[3].

The presence of these new roles is important when considering whether or not the United Nations can protect the interests of smaller nations precisely because the interests of smaller nations are themselves not limited to collective security. Therefore, in order to determine whether or not the United Nations can effectively protect these interests, we must arrive at a formal definition of what these interests are.

In brief, the most important interest of any nation is its national sovereignty, without which all other interests are of no consequence. I will argue that realism provides a strong argument against the effectiveness of a collective security agreement in protecting smaller nations, and that therefore smaller nations cannot view the United Nations as a credible deterrent to any great power unilaterally threatening their sovereignty. Having said this, I will argue that there are other roles that the United

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[2] The distinction between peacekeeping and peacemaking will be discussed later.
[3] A discussion of why peacekeeping and peacemaking are acceptable litmus tests is forthcoming.

Nations can successfully play, even in a unipolar world. Therefore even though the United Nations cannot provide collective security to smaller nations, I will argue that it still be considered a limited success in light of its other roles in which it is successful.

In my paper, I intend to examine all of these issues. In order to do so, I will need to provide a background worldview which will act as a context within which the United Nations and its member states function. I will then examine the concept of what smaller nations are, and attempt to arrive at a definition of what their interests consist of. In order to determine whether or not the United Nations can fulfil these interests, I will argue that peacekeeping and peacemaking missions may be used to indicate whether or not these interests can be fulfilled in a more general sense as well. I will then examine the implications of my findings, and determine if they provide suitable evidence to conclude that (at least) certain interests of smaller nations can be met.

DEFINITIONS, PART I

Before I proceed with my examination of these issues, it is important to define certain terms that I will be using throughout this paper. Because some of these definitions are not universally agreed upon, and thus may be controversial, it is useful to present these definitions at this stage in order to provide a useful context within which the rest of this paper can be understood. The first term that I wish to define is that of a *great power,* for which I will be using the conventional definition as defined by realists. For realists, great powers have certain characteristics: firstly, they possess offensive military power which grants them the ability to credibly threaten other great powers with their military might; second, that they can never be certain about other states' intentions; third, that their primary goal is survival; fourth, that great powers are rational actors. Fundamental

to these four assumptions is that the international system is of an anarchic nature.[4] Mearsheimer's definition of great powers is not controversial, and is generally accepted within realist academic circles.

The definition of a *small state* is far more contentious, because there is no widely agreed definition that is used by political scientists. Indeed, how one defines a small state affects the answer to whether or not the United Nations can protect their interests. In order to understand small states completely, we need to examine two things in further detail: first, we need to arrive at a definition of what a smaller state is; and second, we need to determine what their goals are.

There are various definitions of small states that have already been proposed. One of these was proposed by William Rappard, who wrote about small states in the context of the League of Nations. Rappard defines a small state as a state that is not categorically defined as a great power and as such had no permanent representation on the League's Council (or analogously today, the United Nations' Security Council). He claims that small states are not considered great powers because historically "they have not been militarily dominant or at least prominent"[5]. He continues to say that Small States are considered small because their relative weakness reassures their neighbours.

Rappard's definition of small states is unsatisfactory, because it is too simplistic in that it groups states into the following two categories: permanent members of the Security Council who are great powers, and non-permanent members who are small

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[4] Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* (2001), pp. 30-31. The concept of an anarchic international system will be discussed in the following section of this paper.
[5] Rappard, William E., *Small States in the League of Nations*. Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Dec., 1934), pp. 544-545.

states[6]. Under Rappard's definition, India would be a small state, as it does not have permanent representation. However, India is a nuclear power, and is a significant regional military power, with the potential to become a great power. To classify India in the same category as Somalia or Cambodia (for example) appears to be unreasonable.

We therefore need to arrive at a more specific definition. Within the context of this paper, I will define small states as those states which meet a certain set of criteria that I will now outline. First and foremost, the state should be militarily weak, with no credible prospects of defeating a great power in offensive combat, and a very significant chance of being defeated by a great power if it were invaded by one. Small states typically would not have nuclear arsenals, but this is a characteristic condition, rather than a necessary one[7].

Another necessary condition that I propose is that small states should not have a developed economy, as the presence of a developed economy implies that a certain amount of latent power[8] is present that could be converted to military power. For an economy to be considered undeveloped, necessary conditions are that either the primary sector comprises the majority of the nation's economy, or that little infrastructure exits to support economic development. This supporting infrastructure includes strong legal traditions cemented by the rule of law, and physical infrastructure such as roads, rails and other means of transport. The lack of developed secondary and tertiary economic sectors and the lack of a supporting infrastructure usually go hand-in-hand.

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[6] Using the current terminology of the United Nations, rather than the League's.
[7] A necessary condition in this context one that is required for a country to be considered a small state. A characteristic condition is not necessary, but one that is commonly found in these states.
[8] Mearsheimer, pp. 60.

Finally, a characteristic condition of a small state is that there is no foreseeable end to its status of a small state. Most small states have a stagnant economy, because their combined lack of a developed economy and its supporting infrastructure act as barriers to acquiring the technology and wealth required to build up a significant military force and latent economic power.

Having determined what small states are, we should attempt to determine the nature of their interests. In particular, we should examine the subset of interests for which they look to the United Nations to provide. Examining the goals of small states from a realist perspective does not offer fruitful results, because realists consider small states to be unimportant. Certainly, contemporary realists such as Mearsheimer focus entirely on the interests of great powers. While it may be true that the interests of small nations has no bearing on the outcome of great power politics, this does not mean that small nations do not have a specific set of interests that are generally common amongst them. This warrants further examination.

While realism does not explicitly provide us with a description of the interests of smaller nations, some of the most fundamental interests of smaller nations are likely to be the same as that of great powers. The actions of small states could reasonably be expected to follow at least three of Mearsheimer's assumptions: first, that states seek to preserve themselves; second, that they are rational; and third, that the intentions of other states are unknown. From these three assumptions, we can infer that the primary concern that small states have is that their national sovereignty is maintained. This is a reasonable assumption, and should not be controversial because unless this one interest is fulfilled, a small state has no means with which to fulfil any other interests.

Therefore, the first and foremost interest that small states look to the United Nations for is that of the maintaining their sovereignty, because as small states, they do not have the wherewithal to provide for their own security. Therefore, they rely on the United Nations as a guarantor of collective security. Before we examine the other interests of smaller nations, we should look to see whether or not the United Nations can fulfil its goal of a guarantor of collective security. In order to do so, we first need to examine the nature of the international system within which the United Nations functions.

<div align="center">THEORETICAL BACKGROUND</div>

It is generally agreed upon that since the Westphalian order[9] was established, the state of international politics has been widely characterised as anarchic, meaning that there has been no supranational body to which all states in the international system could be held accountable to[10]. This state of international anarchy was problematic for many reasons. Kenneth Waltz claims that "because some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so – or live at the mercy of their militarily more vigorous neighbours"[11]. He contends that because of the fact that in an anarchic system, there is no supranational body to guarantee security, in anarchy states are forced to provide means to defend themselves against other states, or risk being coerced by them, or even conquered by them.

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[9] Established following the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which set a precedent of recognising the exclusive rights of nation states to wage war upon one another.

[10] Except for possibly the League of Nations, and the United Nations, both of which attempt to mitigate anarchy, but both of which are arguably not supranational bodies from the point of view of sovereignty.

[11] Waltz, Kenneth N. *The Anarchic Structure of International Politics* (1979), in Art and Jervis' *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues,* 6th ed (2003), pp. 57.

The classic security dilemma is also a cause for concern, because it is often impossible to determine *why* a nation is building up its military. Therefore even if a nation decides to bolster its defences, its neighbours may interpret this as an act of aggression and reciprocate, causing a cyclical state in which arms escalation can occur. In the absence of a supranational governing body to deter invasions, this may lead to unintended war. This is certainly not a theoretical problem, but one that has occurred throughout the history of the nation state. The First World War is the most notable incidence of the security dilemma leading to war amongst great powers.

Waltz is careful to distinguish between the notions of anarchy and hierarchy, the former of which he sees between nations, and the latter of which within individual nations. According to Waltz, within nations conflict is prevented because of what he terms 'integration', where the division of labour occurs to such an extent that there are significant costs to upsetting the balance through conflict. He gives the example of Kansas relying on Washington for defence and Washington depending on Kansas for livestock[12]. He contends that this type on integration does not occur between states, because although interdependence between states is certainly beneficial to nations from an absolute point of view, the unequal manner in which the gains from interdependence are shared often limit the degree to which interdependence occurs, thus lowering the potential costs of conflict compared to the cost within a highly integrated single nation. For those states that choose to specialise, he argues that they then become concerned with the security of their trading partners as well. Waltz's worldview is typical of a realist.

Waltz also examines the potential for mitigating anarchy and developing a hierarchic system to govern nations. While he does not examine any specific type of

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[12] Waltz, pp. 58.

system, he notes that "the costs of maintaining such a hierarchic order are frequently ignored by those who deplore its absence."[13] For any supranational organisation that attempts the task of mitigating anarchy, there are significant maintenance costs. Further, he states that "the means of control become an object of struggle,"[14] alluding to the notion that states are highly likely to try and gain control of international organisations such that they can manipulate them to their advantage. Furthermore, to credibly protect against aggressors, such a body would have to control the militaries of its constituents, a tall order.

In his essay, Waltz outlines the classical realist argument: that the mitigation of anarchy is both costly and unlikely, particularly in a world where there are great powers with a disproportionate share of influence. In order to fully understand realist theory, we can expand upon Waltz's foundation by examining more contemporary realist theories.

John Mearshiemer, who ushered in the concept of 'great power politics' and is the primary proponent of offensive realism suggests that the only states in the international system that are of any consequence are the great powers, and that all other states are unimportant, because great powers hold all the influence. Therefore examining the role of great powers will be of primary importance in examining whether or not international organisations such as the United Nations can protect the interests of smaller nations.

Mearsheimer claims that the might of great powers does not stem simply from the quantity of their military forces. He notes that "latent power constitutes the societal resources that a state has available to build military forces."[15] He claims that the status of a great power is defined not just by the size of its military, but also by the size of all of its

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[13] Waltz, pp. 62.
[14] Waltz, pp. 63.
[15] Mearsheimer, pp. 60.

assets that could potentially be used to expand its military might, and its projection of power. These assets include the national economy, natural resources, technology and population, amongst others. To this end, any great power in the system should seek to not only maximise its latent power, but also to ensure that the latent power of its rivals is increasing at a slower rate than its own, implying that relative gains are what states seek, not absolute gains.

Mearsheimer also elucidates the concept of polarity within systems. According to him, there are three types of systems: unipolar, bipolar and multipolar (each referring to the number of great powers in the international system). Mearsheimer contends that true unipolarity with a worldwide hegemon is improbable[16], but would be the most stable system, with no potential for great power conflict. He claims war is more likely in a multipolar system than a bipolar system for three reasons: first, that there are more conflict partners; second, that imbalances of power are more common; and third, that the potential for miscalculation is greater.[17] He further claims that great power conflict is far more likely in unbalanced systems than in balanced systems.[18] While there are many other facets of realist thinking, for the purposes of explaining great powers' actions with regards to smaller nations, the above brief explanation should be sufficient.

PAST AND PRESENT SOLUTIONS

Having determined the nature of international anarchy, and the challenges that nations face within it, we should examine attempts that have been made to mitigate this anarchy. Two of the most prominent attempts to do this have been the League of

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[16] For further information on this, refer to his discussion of the primacy of land forces and their power projection capability, in chapter four of *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.*
[17] Mearsheimer, pp. 338.
[18] Mearsheimer, pp. 344.

Nations[19], and the United Nations[20]. Both of these systems are very similar in nature, with each aiming to provide a collective security arrangement within which their member states could be secure from unchecked aggression by other states. Both systems provide for permanent representation on the highest security council for the five states that were considered to be great powers at the time of each body's inception. However, the one major difference between the two was that the League of Nations did not have the backing of the United States, whose congress did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles.

Given that the League of Nations and the United Nations are so similar in their goals and construct, examining some of the reasons that the League of Nations failed to provide collective security will help to illustrate problems that the United Nations may face in the future in attempting to provide collective security. One of the main problems the League of Nations faced was the problem of permanent representation.

Harold Tobin[21] argues that permanent representation presented a problem for the League of Nations. The Covenant of the League provided for permanent representation for the allied powers and granted them a majority of the votes. This was a problem, because the great powers were interested only in increasing their relative power share, without regard for the interest of smaller nations. For example, he notes that Estonia's initial application to the League was refused by Britain and France on the grounds that no country would send forces to their aid because it was too close to Russia and was

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[19] Established pursuant to the Treaty of Versailles following World War I.
[20] Established in the aftermath of World War II, following the failure of the League of Nations.
[21] Tobin, Harold, *The Problem of Permanent Representation at the League of Nations*. Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Dec., 1933), pp. 481-512.

therefore subject to invasion. They claimed that "no country would permit the use of its troops under Article X of the Covenant for the purpose of protecting such frontiers"[22].

Inaction on points such as this demonstrates that the permanent members of the League were only willing to adhere to the basic principles of collective security as laid out in the League's Covenant if it was in their national interest to do so. The refusal of Estonia's application to the League was a clear signal of their unwillingness to commit themselves to war in territories that were not of strategic importance to them. It is therefore problematic to expect states to spontaneously band together and come to the aid of another threatened state. This is consistent with Waltz's and Mearsheimer's view of realism, as committing troops to defend Estonia may have resulted in a relative power deficit for Britain and France.

John Spencer[23] examines how the League handled the Italian-Ethiopian conflict in great detail, examining their response to both Italian actions and Ethiopian pleas for assistance. He argues that the League failed at each and every step to engage in decisive action to stop Italian aggression, and that ultimately Italy was able to succeed in its invasion of Italy without any meaningful resistance from the League.

Spencer focuses heavily on the British and French efforts to find a conciliatory solution with the Italians. Following the border clash at Wal Wal in 1934, the League of Nations, after much pressure from Ethiopia eventually held the Italians responsible for the aggression and had decided in principle to adopt an embargo on the export of petroleum and related products to Italy. However, Spencer notes that the plans for the embargo were effectively put on hold while the British and the French, the two most

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[22] Tobin, pp. 483.
[23] Spencer, John H., *The Italian-Ethiopian Dispute and the League of Nations.* The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Oct., 1937), pp. 614-641.

influential members of the League, met with each other in order to find a conciliatory solution to the problem.

Spencer's evaluation of the League's handling (or rather lack thereof) of the conflict provides us a useful content within which to examine the arguments presented by Tobin. Tobin argued that the Great Powers abuse their power in the League, simply because they are able to do so without much fear of retaliation. The British and French attempts at conciliation with the Italians are consistent with how Tobin predicts that Great Power states will act. Great Power states in particular, under Tobin's model will never subject themselves to League action that might compromise their interests in the short term or the long term. The argument can be made that the British and the French were afraid of Hitler's increasing power in Germany and were particularly afraid that the Italians under Mussolini would align with Hitler if a war was to break out, rather than with the British and the French. The attempts at conciliation were therefore aimed at avoiding antagonising the Italians and thus pushing them closer to Hitler than they already were.

Can we therefore say that the League of Nations failed in its endeavour to provide collective security? In order to determine this we need to objectively define what constitutes the failure of the League. C. G. Fenwick[24] provides a framework within which we can analyse whether the League failed.

Fenwick contends that the failure of the League to act decisively in the Italian-Ethiopian conflict signals a failure of the League, but that this definition of failure is not

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[24] Fenwick, C. G., *The "Failure" of the League of Nations.* The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Jul., 1936), pp. 506-509.

rigorous. He claims that the real failure of the League can be defined as "the failure of the plan of collective security embodied in Articles 10, 11 and 16 of the Covenant"[25].

Fenwick further claims that many of the League's other functions, including its social and economic activities need not be adversely affected by its inability to provide collective security, but that these functions of the League are secondary functions and that collective security has always been the primary focus of the League and should always be the primary focus of such an international organisation.

Having determined what problems the League of Nations faced, we should determine whether or not the United Nations faces similar problems today. There is no reason to believe the that problems posed by permanent representation are any different under the United Nations; but there have been actual cases where the United Nations has acted in order to protect the sovereignty of a smaller nation from an aggressive foe. Does this mean that the United Nations is more effective at providing collective security to small nations?

In order to answer this question, we need to examine the current context within which the United Nations operates, and examine whether or not it is different from that within the League operated. Although they are similar organisations, the League operated within a multipolar world, with Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States all claiming the status of great powers. As established earlier, multipolarity is inherently unstable due to the increased number of conflict dyads and increased uncertainty, thus making it more dangerous to commit troops to nations whose security is not of central importance to one's own.

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[25] Fenwick, pp. 506. The covenant he refers to is that of the League of Nations.

The United Nations operates within a different context. Following the end of the Second World War, it is recognised amongst realists that a bipolar world order was established with the United States and Russia as the two great power poles. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is argued by many that the world has shifted towards a unipolar power structure. While the argument that the world was bipolar following end of the World War II is generally accepted, the argument that the world is now unipolar is contentious, with some scholars proposing that the international system has now returned to a multipolar state, or that the system now is tending towards a multipolar state.

William Wohlforth argues that the world is currently in a stable unipolar state.[26] His theory is predicated on the notion that "unipolarity rests on two pillars…the power gap separating the United States from other states [and] geography"[27]. He contends that many scholars underestimate the vast nature of the power gap between the United States and other nations, and that they assume that this gap will be closed because of three factors: counterbalancing, regional integration, or the differential growth in power.[28] Wohlforth argues that counterbalancing cannot happen effectively, because he claims that alliances are not structural, meaning that they are less effective than individual states at projecting power internationally. He notes that problems of moral hazard make it very tempting for the counterbalancing states to buck-pass[29] or to doubt their partners' resolve.

As for regional alliances, he claims that barring any shocks, the trend towards seamless regional integration of military forces including nuclear forces will be very slow, even amongst tightly integrated countries such as those in the European Union.

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[26] Wohlforth, William C. *American Power and the Balance of Power* (1999), in Art and Jervis'
International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues, 6th ed (2003).
[27] Wohlforth, pp. 469.
[28] Wohlforth, pp. 469-470.
[29] Buck-passing is the act of passing the military burden of defence or offence to another allied nation.

Wohlforth also attempts to debunk the notion that China has the potential to be a great power within the next 20 years that can rival the United States. He claims that even in the unlikely event that the Chinese economy can balance that of the United States in this time period, this does not mean that China will be able to restore bipolarity to the system, as the United States has a network of close allies in the form of Germany and Japan, and also has significantly better power projection capabilities. Wohlforth not only provides a convincing argument that the world is unipolar today, but also that unipolarity unlikely to be replaced by bipolarity or multipolarity in the short to medium term.

Having established the nature of the unipolar system today, can we reasonably expect the United Nations to be able to act as a guarantor of collective security? Realist theory dictates that a collective security paradigm will never work, because there is no mechanism by which to coerce nations to go to war to protect other nations. As Tobin showed, because nations still retain national sovereignty even under the United Nations, and retain control over their national armies, it unlikely that they will commit any resources to a collective security force unless it is in their national interest to do so. In this context, whether or not it is in their national interest to commit forces depends on whether or not it will increase their power relative to other powers.

Within the context of collective security, only with the backing of great powers can a body such as the United Nations credibly commit to intervene when a country is attacked. However, it is rarely in any great power's interest to go to war on behalf of a small country, as small countries are inherently unimportant, and there is rarely any relative power gain to be had from defending them. Great powers will only come to the aid of small states when it is in their national interest to do so. Therefore, the belief that

the United Nations can provide collective security to small nations is one that is fraught with problems at the most fundamental level.

However, this does not mean that the collective security paradigm can *never* work. For example, when North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950, the United States, with the approval of the United Nations led a force that came to the aid of South Korea and drove the North Koreans back to the 38th Parallel, and in 1953, a ceasefire was agreed upon. A United Nations observer force has remained at the Korean border since that time.

What implications does this successful operation have for the prospects of future collective security operations? I contend that the Korean example is an aberration in the historical record, rather than the rule. There were extenuating circumstances that caused the United States, arguably the most powerful great power at the time, to lead a security force into the Korean Peninsula to expel the North Koreans. Furthermore, there were also extenuating circumstances that allowed the United Nations to sanction such action, even though the forces were not actually under the direct command of the United Nations' Security Council[30].

It can be argued that the United States was primarily interested in protecting South Korea because of great power politics. It saw both Russia and China as communist threats to itself, and did not want to see their bloc strength grow by allowing another communist nation to capture South Korea. Furthermore, South Korea presented an opportunity for the United States to project its power to the Asian continent, and establish a foothold from which they could base further operations, or at least deter further

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[30] Ramsbotham, Oliver; Woodhouse, Peter. *Encyclopedia of International Peacekeeping Operations* (1999), pp. 127.

incursions in order to minimally maintain the status quo distribution of power. Therefore the United States was not motivated by the altruistic notion of aiding South Korea, but its desire to ensure that the balance of power was not shifted against its favour. Moreover, the United Nations was only able to sanction the operation because the USSR was not present at the meetings in which it was approved[31]. Had their representative been present, it is highly likely that such a measure would have been vetoed by them.

Within the realist paradigm, a credible collective security arrangement is therefore problematic, because great powers will not commit to protect small nations unless it is in their interest to do so. This is evidenced not only by the collective security arrangement of the United Nations, but also that of its predecessor, the League of Nations, as I showed earlier using the arguments of Tobin, Spencer and Fenwick. However, just because the United Nations cannot provide for collective security does not mean that it cannot protect any of the interests of smaller nations. We should therefore examine what the other interests of smaller nations are and consider whether the United Nations can provide them.

DEFINITIONS, PART 2

To arrive at an adequate definition of 'interests' we need to examine what smaller nations look to the United Nations for. One option includes defining it as security and sovereignty interests, as discussed before. However, this means that we may be setting a very high bar for the United Nations, which does not make for a useful analysis as security on its own is not representative of all the interests of small nations. We therefore need to arrive at a broader definition that is more encompassing of the social, economic and sovereignty aspects of countries' interests as well.

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[31] Ramsbotham, pp. 127.

Firstly, small nations often use the United Nations as a private diplomatic forum for bilateral negotiations between their nation and another, because while countries such as the United States have diplomatic representation in most countries, small nations are unlikely to have official diplomatic representatives from every nation stationed within their own. In this case, the United Nations can be considered to be a common forum for these nations.

Small nations also look to the United Nations for various economic and social interests as well. For example, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa are reliant on World Health Organization aid and advice in order to keep diseases in check. Countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines are reliant on the International Labour Organization in order to ensure that their emigrant workers are treated fairly. In times of emergency, smaller nations are often reliant on the United Nations for aid in mitigating crises.

We should also reconsider the nature of security interests. While collective security is something that smaller nations would benefit from more than great powers, and is therefore at the forefront of their security interests, it is important to realise that it is not the only type of security interest that exists. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the United Nations has remodelled itself as primarily a peacekeeping and peacemaking force, and the number of these types of operations has increased exponentially.

It is important to understand that peacekeeping and peacemaking operations are not the same thing. Peacekeeping is where there is an existing peace, and the United Nations enters the conflict zone to ensure that the peace is kept and that it is not disturbed. The United Nations can also be used for reassurance or verification purposes,

to ensure that each side is upholding their end of a peace accord. In these cases, peace is generally a wanted outcome and the actors involved seek to maintain it.

Peacemaking, on the other hand is significantly different because the peace is not necessarily a wanted outcome by any of the involved actors. In this case, the United Nations tries to forcibly impose a peace solution upon the involved actors, and peacemaking operations are therefore often longer term commitments due to the lack of interest in peace. Both of these types of operation have become increasingly common, and occur almost exclusively in smaller nations that do not possess a large military force of their own. Peacekeeping and peacemaking can therefore be a central aspect of certain small nations' interests vis-à-vis what they seek from the United Nations.

We have divided a nation's foreign policy interests into subcategories, namely social, economic, security and sovereignty issues. However, the fact that countries have these interests does not necessarily mean that they look to the United Nations in order to ensure that their needs are met. For example, countries may opt to be self-reliant, or form regional alliances or free trade agreements in order to secure their goals. ASEAN is an example of how a group of nations formed a body outside the auspices of the United Nations in order to resolve issues important to their region.

Having defined what small nations' interests are, we need to proceed to analyse whether or not the United Nations meets those needs.

<div align="center">HYPOTHESES</div>

The null hypothesis is that the United Nations is an unsuccessful body that cannot protect any of the interests that its smaller nations demand from it. This null hypothesis should not be controversial.

The alternative hypotheses that are available are numerous, and we need to determine which one provides the best test of whether or not the United Nations is successful. The primary goal of the United Nations (and the League of Nations before it) was ostensibly to provide a collective security arrangement. Leading from this, one possible alternative hypothesis would be that the United Nations provides an effective collective security arrangement and that therefore the United Nations is successful. However, as previously discussed, this provides too shallow a test, and does not capture the many facets of the United Nations' work. If we were to prove that the United Nations does provide collective security then we would conclude that we do not reject the alternative hypothesis, and the United Nations would be a success. If, however, as would be the case, we rejected the null alternative hypothesis, we would accept the null hypothesis disregarding the fact that the United Nations has functions other than providing collective security.

The other alternative hypothesis is that the United Nations at least partially fulfils a set of interests that smaller nations have. The advantage of this hypothesis is that it provides us with a much larger scope for analysis. While collective security would be one of the interests considered (possibly a very important one), the lack of its effectiveness would not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that the United Nations is ineffective at protecting smaller nations' interests.

METHODOLOGY

In order to analyse the second alternative hypothesis I proposed, we would ideally devise a test by which all of a nation's interests could be identified, and then evaluate whether or not the United Nations is able to provide for those interests. However, to do

this for even a single country would be beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I intend to look at peacekeeping and peacemaking operations as test cases for whether or not the United Nations has a role to play in protecting the interests of smaller nations.

While we run the risk of having criteria that is too narrow, I believe that peacekeeping and peacemaking operations will provide us with a good test for whether or not we reject our alternative hypothesis for the following reasons: there have been so many peacekeeping and peacemaking operations in recent years, there is a lot of data available; and these operations generally require a troop commitment from larger member states (great powers in particular) and therefore we are also able to analyse the extent of their commitment to protecting the interests of smaller nations under the auspices of the United Nations.

Our analysis of peacekeeping/peacemaking operations should not be limited to operations that took place, but also operations that did not take place, as this will also aid our understanding of circumstances under which the United Nations is unwilling to commit forces, not just whether or not they are successful when they choose to do so.

In order to analyse peacekeeping and peacemaking (or any other United Nations role), it is necessary to perform a two step analysis. Firstly, within the context of the post Cold War world, we need to look at whether larger nations would be willing to commit resources to aid smaller nations under the auspices of the United Nations.[32]

Secondly, we need to examine whether or not smaller states feel that their aims from the peacekeeping or peacemaking are being met. The aims that small states are likely to have from peacekeeping and peacemaking at the most fundamental level are that

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[32] It is important to distinguish peacekeeping and peacemaking commitments from collective security commitments. The former involves one state and the latter more than one.

their governments are able to exert control over their entire country, and that their governments have a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, rather than rival groups that may be present in the country. The state must also be reassured that once the peacekeeping forces have departed, the rival groups will not once again turn against them.[33] Once these fundamental goals are met, the government of the state is then able to pursue other important goals, such as rebuilding the infrastructure of the nation, establishing the rule of law, and promoting an environment within which the economy can flourish, and ensuring that education levels and health levels of its residents are raised.

<div align="center">WHEN DOES INTERVENTION OCCUR?</div>

Before we analyse whether or not peacekeeping and peacemaking operations can be successful, we should attempt to identify the conditions under which they occur. The intervening body, in this case the United Nations' Security Council must agree to send a force to a nation, and in order for this to occur, all five permanent members of the Security Council must be in agreement. Each of the five member states will engage in a rational calculus of the costs and benefits of intervention. Therefore, intervention will only occur if each of the five permanent members expects that their individual benefits will outweigh their individual costs. Therefore when I analyse the probability of intervention, I do so one a per-state basis, rather than by examining the Security Council as a whole.

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[33] Hawk, Kathleen Hill. *Constructing the Stable State: Goals for Intervention and Peacekeeping* (2002), pp. 2-4.

Patrick Regan[34] provides us with a useful framework within which we can analyse the rational calculus that states undertake when deciding whether or not to intervene in civil conflict. He proposes four hypotheses[35]:

1. The greater the number of countries bordering an internal conflict, the more likely intervention will occur.

2. The more intense a conflict, the less likely intervention becomes.

3. Refugee or humanitarian crises increase the chances of intervention.

4. Interventions were more likely during the Cold War period.

Regan performs a statistical analysis[36] which shows that the first hypothesis is false, and that intervention actually occurs *less* when the number of bordering countries is greater. One possible explanation for this is that there is more uncertainty regarding the possibility of outside fourth-party intervention when there are more bordering countries, and therefore potential interveners would be more wary of committing themselves. Regan found that his second hypothesis was borne out by the data, and that humanitarian crises also had a positive affect on the number of interventions. However, refugee crises had a positive, but insignificant effect on the number of interventions.

The most controversial finding that Regan proposes is that his data suggests that intervention during the Cold War era was *more* likely. He correctly acknowledges that this places him at odds with leading realists who would have predicted that more peacekeeping operations would have occurred during the post-Cold War era, with a unipolar international system. He attempts to conflate his view with the realist view by proposing that during the Cold War, the international system was a zero sum game, such

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[34] Regan, Patrick M. *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervention in Intrastate Conflict* (2000).
[35] Regan, pp. 49-51.
[36] Regan, pp. 57.

that whichever side did not intervene in an intrastate conflict would lose an opportunity to expand their sphere of influence, and that their relative power with regards to the other would decrease. However, this argument does not take into account the realist view that small states do not matter, and that therefore great powers are unlikely to intervene due to relative power considerations, but rather because of considerations outside of great power politics.

Regan's findings with respect to the Cold War are also questionable because there are relatively few data points during the Cold War, as the vast majority of peacekeeping and peacemaking operations began in the post-Cold War era. Therefore his implication that the Cold War encouraged intervention should be viewed cautiously.

Rather than buttress the notion that intervention is undertaken because of great power politics, Regan's analysis supports the argument that intervention may be undertaken for other political reasons. As established earlier, the probability of humanitarian crises was positively correlated with the probability of intervention, whereas the intensity of the intrastate conflict was negatively correlated with it. From the perspective of a great power, a humanitarian crisis elsewhere in the world is of little consequence. These two relationships suggest that rather than great power politics, states are motivated to intervene if their population perceives that a humanitarian crisis can be avoided with little cost to the intervening nation.

The failure of the United Nations in stopping the Rwandan genocide of 1994 illustrates this cost-benefit analysis only too well. It is generally agreed upon by scholars that the United Nations had ample warning that there was a genocide planned, but that they did not take decisive action to prevent it from occurring. While there were Security

Council resolutions in place, their implementation was delayed for long periods of time, especially following the killing of ten Belgian peacekeepers in early 1994.[37] The loss of these ten Belgian peacekeepers shattered the resolve of the peacemaking coalition, who were reluctant to face losses. While there was a humanitarian benefit to be had from the peacemaking operation, the political cost at home of losing troops was too high for such an operation to be worthwhile, based on their rational calculus.

While there are many instances where the United Nations has not intervened, there are also many instances where they have done so. Following the end of the Cold War, the number of peacekeeping and peacemaking missions increased dramatically, as did the willingness of the United Nations to engage in such operations. This contradicts Regan's findings, but I contend that this contradiction is consistent with the notion of potential intervening nations making a ration decision based on a cost-benefit analysis.

Nations will intervene in an intrastate conflict if the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs. Some of the potential benefits that intervening nations look for, particularly in the post-Cold War era, are preferred access to the economy of nations where they intervene, as well as installing governmental institutions that would act favourably towards them. Alternatively, preventing humanitarian crises could result in a domestic 'feel-good' factor that politicians could use to exploit to help cement their re-election. Interventions based on altruistic principles are rare, and certainly out of the question from a realist perspective.

ARE INTERVENTIONS SUCCESSFUL?

We have already established a loose set of criteria for determining whether or not interventions are successful, that is to say that the interests of small nations are being met.

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[37] Ramsbotham, Oliver; Woodhouse, Peter; pp. 213.

This loose set of criteria should be considered to be a guideline, rather than a rigid set. This is because each mission is unique, in that the problems faced are not all of the same nature. I will examine the peacekeeping mission to Cambodia and the peacemaking mission to Somalia in order to determine whether or not the United Nations peacekeeping and peacemaking missions can be successful.

The peacemaking mission in Cambodia followed the Paris Peace Treaty of October 1991, which was backed by all five permanent members of the Security Council, and called for the creation of a provisional government made up by the four political factions, which would rule until free elections could be held.[38]

Michael Doyle claims that this peacekeeping mission accomplished four major goals: first, it freed Cambodia from external influence; second, that the presence of UNTAC[39] ended the civil war; third, that over 370,000 refugees were repatriated; and fourth, that for the first time the United Nations oversaw a democratic election from the planning stages to its completion. However, Doyle also acknowledges that UNTAC failed to disarm the four factions, which caused the elections to be held in a militarised environment, and also failed to control the civil administration, thus compromising political neutrality. [40] Nevertheless, according to Doyle, the most important accomplishment of UNTAC was the latter one, providing a voice to Cambodia's people so that they could choose who governed them. He claims that "the most lasting effect of UNTAC will likely be the population's sense that it can demand accountability from those who govern."[41]

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[38] Doyle, Michael W. *UN Peacekeeping in Cambodia: UNTAC's Civil Mandate* (1995), pp. 19-20.
[39] United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
[40] Doyle, pp. 32-36.
[41] Doyle, pp. 57.

While Doyle's analysis of the Cambodian situation provides a largely positive outlook of UNTAC's Cambodian operation, this positive assessment is not universally agreed upon. Frederick Fleitz[42] contends that UNTAC's operation in Cambodia did not provide the long-term relief that Cambodia required. Specifically, he argues that because UNTAC was not sufficiently armed itself, it was unable to disarm the four factions that were present in Cambodia, and that following UNTAC's withdrawal, Cambodia regressed to a form of government that was democratic only by name. He suggests that had UNTAC been given more resources, it could have left behind a viable democracy, rather than a weak one which regressed as soon as UNTAC left. While Fleitz is pessimistic about Cambodia's political future, he does contend that Cambodia is a far more peaceful place than it was before UNTAC's mission.

The Cambodian case does not strictly meet my definition of success, in that it did not enable the Cambodian government to have a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. As a result, the other secondary goals I outlined could not be effectively met. However, while the mission was not a complete success, it was at least a partial one, because Cambodia after UNTAC's intervention was much more stable, and the prospects for Cambodia's interests to be fulfilled were much greater than they were before the intervention.

We now turn to the peacemaking case of Somalia, where civil war had divided the country, and a humanitarian crisis was looming. The original mission UNOSOM I was largely inadequate, and the United States replaced it with a stronger force, UNITAF, under the auspices of the United Nations. When the situation in Somalia stabilised,

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[42] Fleitz, Frederick H, Jr., *Peacekeeping Fiascoes of the 1990s: Causes, Solutions, and U.S. Interests* (2002), pp. 125-130.

UNITAF was replaced by another United Nations peacemaking force, UNOSOM II. Hawk examines the effectiveness of this peacemaking mission by evaluating key indicators of progress.

Hawk's assessment of the Somali mission is bleak. She contends that both UNOSOM I and II were unable to achieve any of the following goals[43] due to either lack of resources, or underestimating the depth of the problems:

- No lasting ceasefire agreement was signed.
- The Somali state did not gain control over its territory.
- The disarming of combatants was only partially accomplished by UNITAF.
- The rule of law was not re-established.
- Few refugees were repatriated, with the flow slowing further after fighting resumed after UNOSOM II departed.
- Economic development stagnated.

In fact, Hawk's assessment of the situation is that both of the United Nations' missions to Somalia were completely ineffective at providing even a temporary solution, and that only UNITAF, which was led by and had the full commitment of the United States was able to achieve any tangible results. Furthermore, as in the Rwandan case, once eighteen American soldiers were killed in 1994, the United States reconsidered its support for the peacemaking mission, and many other nations followed suit. Soon after, UNOSOM II was withdrawn from Somalia. While it is true that the peacemaking missions prevented the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people, it provided no semblance of lasting peace. In this case, it is clear that the interests of Somalia were not met, and that the peacemaking mission had failed. However, it is highly probable that had the great powers invested more resources into UNOSOM II, that success was a likely and achievable possibility.

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[43] Hawk, pp. 46-55.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We have concluded that peacekeeping and peacemaking have the potential to at least be partially successful, and that great powers are willing to provide resources make these peacekeeping and peacemaking missions a reality. When I originally chose peacekeeping and peacemaking as testcases for the alternative hypothesis that the United Nations can fulfil some of the interests of smallest nations, I chose them because barring collective security, they are possibly the most costly and difficult enterprises that the United Nations undertakes. The fact that great powers have been increasingly willing to provide resources for peacekeeping and peacemaking since the end of the Cold War indicates that small nations can look to great powers to provide the United Nations with the resources it needs to fulfil their other interests. As for the specific cases of peacekeeping and peacemaking themselves, missions such as the UNFICYP in Cyprus illustrate that great powers are willing to commit themselves to peacekeeping and peacemaking over the long term as well.

One conclusion that we can draw is that for the United Nations to have any prospect of fulfilling the interests of smaller nations, it must have the backing of the great powers, without which the United Nations has no credibility. The Somali case demonstrates this clearly, as the UNOSOM I and II forces were unsuccessful due to half-hearted backing from the great powers, while UNITAF, strongly backed by the United States was far more successful in its mission.

However, the backing of great powers, as demonstrated, is fickle. Often, they will not undertake peacekeeping missions because the cost-benefit ratio is unfavourable. When it is favourable, they embark upon missions that remain incomplete if the costs

unexpectedly rise. However, this problem is only a real threat to peacekeeping and peacemaking, the costs of which can be very unpredictable. For other operations, such as the economic and health development programmes, or other United Nations based aid agencies, the uncertainties are far less. If great powers are willing to commit resources to costly operations such as peacekeeping and peacemaking, they would also be willing to commit to these other programmes, which are far less expensive, and have a much higher chance of success.

I therefore contend that we can reject the null hypothesis that the United Nations cannot fulfil any of the interests of small nations, and I reject the alternative hypothesis that the United Nations can fulfil *all* of the interests of small nations, including collective security, but I do not reject the alternative hypothesis that the United Nations *can* fulfil many other interests that smaller nations have.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

There are two major areas where further study would be useful and appropriate. The first of these areas is to examine how regional alliances affect the interests for which small states look to the United Nations. There are different types of regional alliances, such as ASEAN, which is primarily an economic forum, though it is also a forum for security issues as well. There are also military alliances, such as NATO, which seek to provide a collective security arrangement for its members, without encumbering itself by attempting to achieve economic and social goals, which are part of the United Nations' work. The interaction between these regional bodies and the United Nations would be an interesting topic for further study, including how (if at all) membership in these bodies

affects how small states perceive the United Nations' usefulness, and their willingness to work with it.

One of the failures of the United Nations is that that it has not provided a framework for a credible collective security arrangement. Therefore, as a second topic for further examination, it would be interesting to evaluate whether or not the lack of an effective collective security arrangement is in fact problematic in the long-term. Countries are, in general, moving towards more open and representative forms of government, rather than away from them. Does the empirical 'fact' that democracies do not fight each other imply that in a futuristic world that might be composed primarily of democracies, no international body would be needed to ensure collective security? An examination of this 'democratic peace'[44] theory would be interesting and shed light on whether the primary aim of the United Nations is likely to move away from providing a collective security arrangement. An analysis of Lipson's theory would be particularly interesting when viewed in the light of Farber and Gowa's article regarding the relationship between the interests and polities of nations[45], and Mousseau and Shi's work on testing for a reverse causality relationship in the democratic peace theory[46].

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[44] As proposed by Charles Lipson, in *Reliable Partners: How Democracies Have Made a Separate Peace* (2003).

[45] Farber, Henry S.; and Gowa, Joanne. *Common Interests or Common Polities? Reinterpreting the Democratic Peace.* The Journal of Politics, Vol. 59, No. 2 (May, 1997), pp. 393-417.

[46] Mousseau, Michael; and Shi, Yuhang. *A Test for Reverse Causality in the Democratic Peace Relationship.* Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 36, No. 6 (November, 1999), pp. 639-663.

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