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# *Regional Peacekeeping Operations: Complementing or Undermining the United Nations Security Council?*<sup>1</sup>

OLDRICH BURES\*

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*This article provides an analysis of the perils and benefits of regional peacekeeping operations (PKOs), with a special focus on their ability to serve as a complement to and/or enhancement of their United Nations (UN) counterparts. The author contends that there are two sides to the debate about the regionalization of peacekeeping. On one hand, regional PKOs offer a number of advantages to their purely UN counterparts, primarily due to their proximity to conflict zones, common culture, and greater legitimacy. On the other hand, past experience with regional PKOs suggests that there are significant problems with the idea of regionalization as an optimum mechanism for organizing PKOs. Serious doubts remain about whether the need and desire for cooperation between the UN and regional arrangements (RAs) will ultimately translate into a workable and efficient system.*

## **Introduction**

Since the end of the cold war, there has been a debate concerning the expanded use of regional peacekeeping operations (PKOs).<sup>2</sup> While a significant part of this debate has centered around regional arrangements (RAs) as a possible alternative to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping, the purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of both the benefits and perils of PKOs conducted by RAs, with a special focus on their ability to serve as a complement to and/or enhancement of their UN counterparts. I first address the definitional dilemmas inherent to the study of regional arrangements, followed by a discussion of the original, post-World War II ideas about the proper division of labor between RAs and the UN in the area of international peace and security maintenance. I then review the past experiences with PKOs conducted by RAs and summarize the advantages and disadvantages of regional peacekeeping. Finally, I contend that serious doubts remain over whether the need and desire for cooperation between the UN and RAs will ultimately translate into a workable, efficient system. I also offer some observations concerning the ability of RAs to serve as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, UN PKOs.

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1 The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and Tona M. Boyd for proofreading.

2 UN General Assembly, 'Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations Organization and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization', A/RES/46/58, (9 December 1991), <<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r058.htm>> (accessed 10 January 2005); Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (New York: United Nations, 1992); UN General Assembly, 'Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in All Their Aspects', A/RES/48/42, (10 December 1993), <<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r042.htm>> (accessed 12 October 2004); and a number of other UN reports and journal articles cited in the following.

## Definitions: What Are Regional Arrangements?

Although regional arrangements of various kinds have been involved in the conduct of international politics for at least as long as the UN, there is no universally accepted definition of the term 'regional arrangement.' According to Boutros-Ghali, this conceptual muddle is due partly to the fact that the UN Charter deliberately provides no precise definition, 'thus allowing flexibility for undertakings by a group of states to deal with a matter appropriate for regional action which also could contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.'<sup>3</sup> For his part, the former UN Secretary General suggests in *An Agenda for Peace* that regional arrangements could include:

[T]reaty-based organizations, whether created before or after the founding of the United Nations, regional organizations for mutual security and defense, organizations for general regional development or for cooperation on a particular economic topic or function, and groups created to deal with a specific political, economic or social issue of current concern.<sup>4</sup>

By way of contrast, the Organization of American States (OAS) offers a more parochial definition of RAs as based on the principles of proximity and affinity, which give rise 'to a culture of participation, shared historical experience, closeness, and thorough knowledge of the particular circumstances of each region.' These principles enable RAs 'to participate with a better prospect of success in the solution of regional problems.'<sup>5</sup>

In the absence of a binding definition, the terms 'regional arrangement' and/or 'regional organization' have been used interchangeably to refer to regional, subregional, interregional, and transregional arrangements.<sup>6</sup> As Michael Pugh and Wahegure Pal Singh Sidhu point out, 'even the term "regional," denoting spatial contiguity and geographical boundaries, reflects [an] ad hoc approach and is something of a misnomer.'<sup>7</sup> They note, for example, that the 15 organizations presently represented at high-level meetings with the UN include RAs that are 'divergent in spatial destination as well as structure, competence, and role.'<sup>8</sup> It is also interesting to note, however, that while this extended conception of RAs allows the UN Security Council to call on a diversity of institutions, in practice 'the wording used in Council's resolutions shows a reluctance to name the regional organizations it mandates or uses when they have mainly military functions.'<sup>9</sup> This has been the case particularly for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union.<sup>10</sup>

3 Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, para. 61.

4 Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, para. 35.

5 Michael Barnett, 'Partners in Peace? The UN, Regional Organizations and Peacekeeping', *Review of International Studies*, 21, 4, (October 1995), p. 418.

6 Richard Jones and Tamara Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping: The UN & Regional Organizations', *Peacekeeping & International Relations*, 25, 3, (May/June 1996), p. 5.

7 Michael Pugh and Wahegure Pal Singh Sidhu, 'Introduction', in Michael Pugh and Wahegure Pal Singh Sidhu (eds), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond*, (Boulder, CO and London, UK: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), p. 2.

8 The 15 RAs represented include the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Commonwealth of Independent States, the British Commonwealth Secretariat, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union (EU), the League of Arab States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the African Union (formerly the Organization of African Unity (OAU)), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization Internationale de la Francophonie, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Western European Union: Pugh and Singh Sidhu, 'Introduction', p. 2.

9 Nina Graeger and Alexandra Novosseloff, 'The Role of the OSCE and the EU', in Pugh and Singh Sidhu (eds), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond*, p. 76.

10 In contrast, as Graeger and Novosseloff have noted, the UN Security Council has very often expressly named the OAU, OAS, and OSCE (i.e. RAs formally recognized as such by the UN General Assembly) in the text of its resolutions: 'The Security Council therefore draws a distinction between the organizations formally recognized by the General Assembly and the others, and between civilian military organizations and military alliances. In practice, however, the Council uses the regional organizations that are most able to fulfill the tasks it assigns them.' Graeger and Novosseloff, 'The Role of the OSCE and the EU', p. 76.

This observation in turn seems to support Davidson Black's contention that at least three basic conceptions of RAs developed over time in the post-World War II period. The first is based in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and is typified by such multipurpose organizations as the OAS, the European Union (EU), and the African Union. They have developed means of assessing interstate conflicts, relying mainly on the passive settlement of disputes through mediation and arbitration, thus usually leaving measures requiring the use of force to the UN Security Council. The second concept is characterized by traditional military alliances and collective defense pacts, with the main organizations being NATO, the Australia, New Zealand and United States alliance, the South East Asia Treaty Organization, and the Western European Union. These structures were designed originally to face external threats rather than intra-regional conflicts. The third concept is 'that of security through cooperation and collective action in the political field.'<sup>11</sup> The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are typified by a broad, inclusive membership.<sup>12</sup>

### **Development of Ideas about the Proper Division of Labor between RAs and the UN in the Area of International Peace and Security Maintenance**

The importance of regional arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security was recognized by the founders of the United Nations, although the April 1945 San Francisco conference on a UN Charter witnessed an 'explosive' clash between seemingly incompatible universal and regional tendencies.<sup>13</sup> Representatives from several states favored a regionalist approach in which local great powers would assume responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in their respective areas. Winston Churchill, in particular, favored regionalism to safeguard Euro-Atlantic interests and, as some observers noted, to 'perpetuate the British imperium in another guise.'<sup>14</sup> In the end, the idea of a universal collective security organization prevailed but the founding fathers devoted an entire chapter of the UN Charter to stipulate the crucial role of regional arrangements for dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.<sup>15</sup>

Under Article 52 of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, RAs were empowered legally to conduct peacekeeping missions, provided they had the consent of the parties to the dispute. While stressing that 'no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council,' Article 53.1 asked the Security Council to 'utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority.' In addition, Article 33 stated that, in the first instance, the parties shall seek a resolution to the dispute by, *inter alia*, 'resort[ing] to regional agencies or arrangements.' Some authors have argued that Article 33 of the UN Charter encourages

11 Davidson Black, 'Widening the Spectrum: Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping Operations', *Peacekeeping & International Relations*, 25, 3, (May/June 1996), p. 7.

12 Black, 'Widening the Spectrum: Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping Operations', pp. 7–8.

13 Michael Pugh, 'The World Order Politics of Regionalization', in Pugh and Singh Sidhu (eds), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond*, p. 33.

14 Justin Morris and Hilairre McCoubrey, 'Regional Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era', *International Peacekeeping*, 6, 2, (Summer 1999), p. 142.

15 According to Louise Fawcett, RA appearance in the final version of the UN Charter followed representations from states with investments in the few pre-World War II regional arrangements such as the Inter-American System, the Arab League, and the Commonwealth. It was suggested that '[i]t was particularly the Latin American states, fearing the consequences of U.S. hegemony and veto power, who saw in the Organization of American States a vehicle for containment, which pressed for this clause.' Louise Fawcett, 'The Evolving Architecture of Regionalization', in Pugh and Singh Sidhu (eds), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond*, p. 13.

disputants to exhaust regional possibilities before invoking UN measures, in effect making regional agencies the 'gatekeepers' for the Security Council.<sup>16</sup> Others, however, interpret the division of labor between regional and international organizations, as originally foreseen in the UN Charter, quite differently:

Small crisis that could be settled by peaceful means under Chapter VI of the UN Charter should be within the competence of regional arrangements, whereas major crisis have to be settled at the world level, including potential resort to Chapter VII enforcement measures.<sup>17</sup>

In practice, cooperation envisaged in the UN Charter between RAs and the UN as partners in maintaining international peace and security was quickly curtailed by the nature and composition of the Security Council and by the exigencies of Cold War politics. Regional allegiances, according to Fawcett, were primarily defined by the East–West divide, and 'with the UN system so evidently constrained, peace and security were delivered unilaterally, or regionally, notably through the Warsaw Pact, NATO, and related organizations, or *ad hoc* coalitions.'<sup>18</sup> The few major RAs that remained outside the Cold War blocs played a relative minor role in security maintenance and many Cold War conflicts remained outside the remit of any RA.<sup>19</sup> Thus, it was not until the end of the Cold War that the newly rediscovered possibilities and limitations of UN action marked a renewed interest in RAs and their possible roles in maintaining international peace and security.

After the end of the Cold War, there was a flurry of expectation that the UN would finally assume the role of a world peace guarantor envisaged in its own Charter in 1945. These expectations were not entirely unprecedented but the UN moment did not last long. The failures of UN PKOs in Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda revealed that the UN was overburdened, leading to the reappraisal of the role of RAs in maintaining international security.<sup>20</sup> The desirability of burden-sharing and greater regional input was recognized by the UN General Assembly and by the last three UN Secretaries-General, who all highlighted the potential role of RAs along with the need to revitalize Chapter VIII provisions.

In December 1991, for example, the UN General Assembly requested that the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations Organization and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization 'consider the proposal on the enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.'<sup>21</sup> Two years later, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to:

[C]onsider ways to provide advice and assistance, in a variety of forms such as advisory services, seminars and conferences, to regional organizations and arrangements in their respective areas of competence, so as to enhance their capacity to cooperate with the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping operations.<sup>22</sup>

In response to this request, Boutros-Ghali clarified the role that RAs should play in resolving international conflict in the 1995 *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*. He made a clear distinction between Chapter VI and Chapter VII activities, advocating that the Secretary-General should be restricted to managing Chapter VI operations, while Chapter VII missions

16 Henry Wiseman, *Peacekeeping: Appraisals & Proposals*, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983), p. 258.

17 Pugh and Singh Sidhu, 'Introduction', p. 3.

18 Fawcett, 'The Evolving Architecture of Regionalization', p. 14.

19 Fawcett, 'The Evolving Architecture of Regionalization', p. 15.

20 Thomas Weiss, *Beyond UN Subcontracting: Task-Sharing with Regional Security Arrangement and Service-Providing NGOs*, (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. xii.

21 Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations Organization and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, para. 4, <<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r058.htm>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

22 'Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in All Their Aspects', para. 65, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r042.htm> (accessed 6 December 2004).

should be the responsibility of the Security Council. The Security Council, in turn, would enlist the assistance of regional organizations by contracting out the more ambitious operations to multinational forces led by powers with a special interest in the situation. More specifically, the Secretary-General distinguished five different forms of cooperation already occurring between RAs and the UN in the mid-1990s (consultation, diplomatic support, operational support, co-deployment and joint operations) and identified four principles that ought to govern this cooperation in the future: (1) establishing mechanisms for consultation; (2) respecting the primacy of the UN; (3) defining a clear division of labor to avoid duplication; and (4) adopting a consistent approach to common problems.<sup>23</sup>

More recently, the *Brahimi Report* of 2000 recommended strengthening cooperation between the UN and regional organizations and establishing new regional partnerships on specific issues. However, the report devoted only one paragraph to RAs, failing to provide any new insights or innovative ideas.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, the 2004 UN report by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change made a number of interesting observations and suggestions regarding future cooperation between UN and RAs. The Panel stated clearly that the ability of the Security Council:

to become more proactive in preventing and responding to threats will be strengthened by making fuller and more productive use of the Chapter VIII provisions of the Charter of the United Nations than has hitherto been the case.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, the Panel suggested that the UN should encourage the establishment of RAs, 'particularly in highly vulnerable parts of the world where no effective security organizations currently exist.'<sup>26</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the Panel stipulated that the key challenges are: (1) to organize regional action within the framework of the Charter and the purposes of the UN, and (2) to ensure that the UN and any RA with which it works do so in a more integrated fashion than had occurred previously. In order to ensure that these two challenges are met, the Panel made six recommendations:

1. Authorization from the Security Council should in all cases be sought for regional peace operations, recognizing that in some urgent situations that authorization may be sought after such operations have commenced;
2. Consultation and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations should be expanded and could be formalized in an agreement, covering such issues as meetings of the heads of the organizations, more frequent exchange of information and early warning, co-training of civilian and military personnel, and exchange of personnel within peace operations;
3. In the case of African regional and subregional capacities, donor countries should commit to a 10-year process of sustained capacity-building support, within the African Union strategic framework;
4. Regional organizations that have a capacity for conflict prevention or peacekeeping should place such capacities in the framework of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System;
5. Member States should agree to allow the United Nations to provide equipment support from United Nations-owned sources to regional operations, as needed;

23 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, (New York: United Nations, 1995), pp. 31–32.

24 United Nations, 'Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations' (21 August 2000), <[http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace\\_operations/](http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/)>, (accessed 16 October 2004).

25 UN High-level Panel on Threats, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* (1 December 2004), <<http://www.un.org/secureworld/report3.pdf>>, (accessed 2 December 2004).

26 UN High-level Panel on Threats, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, para. 271, <http://www.un.org/secureworld/report3.pdf> (accessed 2 December 2004).

6. The rules for the United Nations peacekeeping budget should be amended to give the United Nations the option on a case-by-case basis to finance regional operations authorized by the Security Council with assessed contributions.<sup>27</sup>

A number of these recommendations were subsequently reiterated by Kofi Annan in his report *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*.<sup>28</sup>

In the Final Document of the 2005 World Summit, the leader's of UN Member States specifically expressed their support to: (a) the efforts of the EU and other regional entities to develop capacities such as for rapid deployment, standby and bridging arrangements; and (b) the development and implementation of a 10-year plan for capacity-building with the African Union.<sup>29</sup> They also acknowledged the importance of RAs for the maintenance of international security by proposing that the membership of the new Peacebuilding Commission should include representatives from 'relevant regional and subregional organizations'.<sup>30</sup> It remains to be seen how many of these proposals will ultimately be acted upon and what real world impact will they make.

## Past Experiences and Mechanisms of Regional Peacekeeping

The idea of regional peacekeeping is hardly a novel one. Already, during the Cold War, several RAs experimented with peacekeeping. Until the mid-1990s, however, there was little regional enthusiasm for undertaking more substantial peacekeeping initiatives and only a few prominent RAs conducted more than one mission.<sup>31</sup> Like the UN, none of the RAs had provisions in their charters for the authorization of peacekeeping missions. Consequently, only a few RAs developed the necessary military and institutional structures required for launching and sustaining PKOs before the end of the cold war.

Since the early 1990s, however, there has been a proliferation of regional peace-cum activities (see Table 1).<sup>32</sup> Several RAs have attempted to acquire the necessary military and institutional capacities for conducting PKOs. Perhaps most notably, learning from its failures in the Balkans in the early 1990s, the EU became the first (and thus far the only) RA to develop the whole range of civilian and military mechanisms and tools for managing a conflict from its latent stage through escalation to peacebuilding stages.<sup>33</sup> Another RA that

27 UN High-level Panel on Threats, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, para. 272, <http://www.un.org/secureworld/report3.pdf> (accessed 2 December 2004).

28 Kofi Annan, 'In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All', United Nations, (21 March 2005), para. 215, <<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/270/78/PDF/N0527078.pdf?OpenElement>> (accessed 23 September 2005).

29 United Nations, '2005 World Summit Outcome' (20 September 2005), para. 93, <<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N05/511/30/PDF/N0551130.pdf?OpenElement>> (accessed 25 September 2005).

30 United Nations, '2005 World Summit Outcome', para. 100, <<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N05/511/30/PDF/N0551130.pdf?OpenElement>> (accessed 25 September 2005).

31 Paul F Diehl, 'Institutional Alternatives to Traditional UN Peacekeeping: An Assessment of Regional and Multi-national Options', *Armed Forces & Society*, 19, 2, (Winter 1993), p. 210.

32 Peace-cum operations by RAs encompass a wide range of activities, including peacemaking (actions to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI), peace-keeping (operations undertaken with consent of all major parties to a conflict, intended to facilitate the implementation of ceasefire or peace agreement), peace enforcement (operations that seek to impose the will of the Security Council by direct military action, often without the consent of some local parties) and post-conflict peacebuilding (actions to identify and support structures that will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict). There is much debate about the precise distinctions between these four types of activities, especially when it comes to determining where peacekeeping ends and peace enforcement begins. The resolution of this debate is beyond the scope of this article.

33 In the summer of 2003, the EU conducted its first full-fledged peacekeeping operation in north-eastern Congo (operation 'Artemis'). The experiences with this operation subsequently inspired the EU Member States to entertain the idea of forming small, rapidly deployable units (so-called 'Battle Groups') that would be able to intervene in conflicts far outside of Europe, with their main focus being Africa and their aim being the stabilization of the

**Table 1** Examples of peace-cum operations conducted by regional arrangements since 1990

Organization	Peace-cum operations: type and location
African Union (OAU successor organization, 2002)	Observer missions: Somalia (2003–) Peacekeeping forces: Burundi (2003–)
Commonwealth of Independent States	Peacekeeping forces: Abkhazia, Georgia (1994–), Tajikistan (1993–2003)
British Commonwealth Secretariat	Observer missions: South Africa (1993–1994), Zimbabwe (2002)
Communauté Économique et Moétaire de l'Afrique Centrale	Peacekeeping forces: Central African Republic (2002–)
Economic Community of West African States	Peacekeeping forces: Liberia (1990–1999, 2003–), Ivory Coast (2002–), Guinea Bissau (1998–1999), Sierra Leone (1997–2000)
European Community/Union	Observer missions: including South Africa (1993–1994), Zimbabwe (2002), Zambia (2002) Post-conflict reconstruction: Croatia (1996), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1993–), Serbia and Montenegro (2000–), Kosovo (1999–) Peacekeeping forces: Macedonia (2003–), Democratic Republic of Congo (2003)
North Atlantic Treaty Organization	Enforcing embargoes: former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (enforcing 'no-fly' zone, air protection for UNPROFOR) Peace enforcement: Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995), Kosovo (1999) Post-conflict stability: Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995–), Kosovo (1999–), Macedonia (1999–2003), Afghanistan (2003–)
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe	Peacemaking: Georgia (1992–), Azerbaijan (1999–), Moldova (1993–) Verification missions: Kosovo (1998–1999) Observer missions: Macedonia (1992–), Estonia (1992–2001), Latvia (1993–2001), Croatia (1996–), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995–) Monitoring police: Eastern Slavonia (1996–7)
Organization of African Unity (became African Union, 2002)	Military observers: Rwanda (1991–1993), Burundi (1994–1996), the Comoros (2001–2002), Sudan (2004–) Referendum monitoring: Western Sahara (1994–)
Organization of American States	Electoral assistance: Haiti (1990–1991, 1995, 1997, 2000), Nicaragua (1990, 1994, 1996), El Salvador (1991, 1997, 1999), Paraguay (1991–1993, 2000), Dominican Republic (1990, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002), Guatemala (1990, 1995, 1999), Costa Rica (1990), Panama (1991–1992, 1994, 1998–1999)
Southern African Development Community	Observer missions: Zimbabwe (2000–2002) Peacekeeping forces: Lesotho (1998–1999), Democratic Republic of Congo (1998–2002)

Source: Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, (2004) and original research.



adapted relatively quickly to the post-Cold War security state of affairs was NATO, which now considers out-of-area 'peace support operations' not involving a direct attack upon the territory of its Member States as an important part of its future role.<sup>34</sup> The OSCE also managed to extend its original mandate by taking on new civilian tasks. The 1999 Istanbul summit gave the organization some capabilities in the field of peacekeeping.<sup>35</sup> It is also important to note that the OSCE, along with the UN, is the only organization legally empowered to initiate peacekeeping missions in Europe.<sup>36</sup>

Not surprisingly, the end of the Cold War had its most direct impact upon the European and transatlantic RAs. Nonetheless, it also forced other major RAs to radically rethink their positions and, in some cases, to effectively reinvent themselves. The OAU, for example, decided to establish a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution at its Tunis summit in 1993 and used it to dispatch a 67-strong international observer mission to Burundi, at a time when the UN Security Council rejected calls from the Secretary-General for a UN peacekeeping force to be deployed.<sup>37</sup> Subsequently, the OAU sought to further develop its peacekeeping capability at its summit in Addis Ababa in June 1995, recommending that military contingents be made available for immediate deployment and three regional centers be created to coordinate training logistics and equipment supplies.<sup>38</sup> Many observers nevertheless noted that the operational capacity of the OAU, as well as its 2002 successor organization, the African Union, is still 'open to some debate.'<sup>39</sup> Consequentially, a number of subregional African groupings, including the Economic Community of West African States and the South African Development Community, began to develop and strengthen their own conflict resolution mechanisms and capabilities. A recent review by The International Peace Academy, however, revealed 'profound institutional weaknesses' of African subregional RAs and concluded that '[a]ll of Africa's subregional organizations lack the financial, logistical and military resources to undertake effective military operations.'<sup>40</sup>

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situation until sufficient military forces—UN peacekeeping troops or armed forces from other organizations—were available. The formation of 13 such Battle Groups was formally approved by the EU Member States on 22 November 2004. As with several other previous EU initiatives in the area of European Security and Defence Policy, however, the Battle Group concept raises multiple military, implementation and financing questions that have not yet been answered accordingly. Perhaps most importantly, the EU presently lacks the requirements to deploy the Battle Groups far beyond its own borders. For more information on the Battle Groups initiative, see Karl-Heinz Kamp, 'European "Battle Groups": A New Stimulus for the European Security and Defense Policy?', in *Analysen und Argumente of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation* (15 December 2004), <www.kas.de/db\_files/dokumente/7\_dokument\_dok\_pdf\_5851\_1.pdf> (accessed 24 September 2005).

34 For more information on NATO's new out-of-area roles, see Dick A. Leurdijk, 'The UN and NATO: The Logic of Primacy', in Pugh and Singh Sidhu (eds), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond*, pp. 57–74. It is important to note, however, that, strictly speaking, NATO does not consider itself a regional organization but rather a defense alliance. Some observers also maintain that military organizations such as NATO are ill suited to handle multidimensional civilian tasks or to work in close proximity with the aid organizations or local populations, which is one of the keys to successful peacekeeping. In Bosnia, NATO has been able to partly overcome this handicap by working closely with the OSCE and the UN. For more information, see Walter Dorn, 'Regional Peacekeeping Is Not the Way', *Peacekeeping & International Relations*, 27, 3/4, (July–October 1998), pp. 1–4.

35 These include the Operation Center within the organization's Secretariat for planning and implementing OSCE field operations; and the Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams mechanism, which was established to facilitate and improve the selection and the recruitment of personnel for field missions. For more information on OSCE's peacekeeping initiatives, see Graeger and Novosseloff, 'The Role of the OSCE and the EU', p. 84.

36 Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping', p. 5.

37 Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping', p. 5.

38 Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping', p. 5.

39 Morris and McCoubrey, 'Regional Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era', p. 142.

40 Cited in Brian L. Job, 'The UN, Regional Organizations, and Regional Conflict: Is There a Viable Role for the UN?', in Richard M. Price and Mark W. Zacher (eds), *The United Nations and Global Security*, (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004), p. 235.

In the Americas, the OAS, no longer preoccupied with the perceived communist threat, turned to a broader concept of security, with issues such as human rights, democratization, and economic and social development high on its agenda. Given the historical experiences of the organization and a persistent fear of US hegemonism among some OAS Member States, the organization emphasizes peacebuilding rather than peace enforcement.<sup>41</sup> In the 1990s, the OAS joined with the UN to monitor elections in a number of Latin American countries. Perhaps most notably, in conjunction with the UN Mission in Haiti, the OAS deployed a 92-member international civilian mission to verify the human rights situation according to the Haitian constitution and international agreements.<sup>42</sup>

In South East Asia, ASEAN established a Regional Forum to deal with conflict resolution in the region in 1994. The Forum subsequently discussed issues such as the current status of UN peacekeeping operations, training for peacekeeping support operations and stand-by arrangements. It is important to note that the 'ASEAN way' of conflict management is unstructured, informal and based entirely on consensus. Some authors argue that in a region with no tradition of multilateral security cooperation, even a forum such as the Regional Forum represents a step forward and 'cautious encouragement can be drawn from the record of its performance so far.'<sup>43</sup> In 1999, however, the 'ASEAN way' *de facto* prevented the Forum to come forward in the East Timor crisis—its Member States shied away from engagement for fear of alienating one of their own.<sup>44</sup>

In the former Soviet Union, Russia deployed its forces in Abkhazia, Moldova and Tajikistan as part of the Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping missions, but in the absence of effective international scrutiny and control, concerns remain about their impartiality and their apparent willingness to resort to force in excess of that generally deemed appropriate for peacekeeping purposes.<sup>45</sup>

In several other regions of the world, however, peacekeeping does not figure high on the agenda of existing RAs. Perhaps most importantly, both the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference lack the capacity and political will to deal with the protracted Arab–Israeli conflict. Worse yet, some regions still lack a regional framework through which PKOs could be undertaken. Subcontinental South Asia is the most prominent example in this regard. This is particularly troubling given historically turbulent relations between India and Pakistan, which both possess nuclear weapons.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Regional PKOs

Notwithstanding the extensive debates concerning the expanded use of regional peacekeeping since the end of the Cold War, there is little agreement in the scholarly community regarding the prudence of using RAs for expanded PKOs. While only a few authors seem to share Walter Dorn's contention that 'regional peacekeeping is, in general, a bad idea,'<sup>46</sup> most experts acknowledge that regional peacekeeping is no panacea.<sup>47</sup> In the following paragraphs, I summarize the key arguments for and against the use of RAs for PKOs.

41 Morris and McCoubrey, 'Regional Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era', p. 140.

42 Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping', p. 5.

43 Hugo J. Dobson, 'Regional Approaches to Peacekeeping Activities: The Case of the ASEAN Regional Forum', *International Peacekeeping*, 6, 2, (Summer 1999), p. 152.

44 See Alan Dupont, 'ASEAN's Response to the East Timor Crisis', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 54, 2, (2000), pp. 163–170.

45 Morris and McCoubrey, 'Regional Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era', p. 140.

46 Dorn, 'Regional Peacekeeping Is Not the Way', p. 1.

47 Black, 'Widening the Spectrum: Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping Operations'; Diehl, 'Institutional Alternatives to Traditional UN Peacekeeping'; Fawcett, 'The Evolving Architecture of Regionalization'; Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping'; Maurice Marnika, 'Regional Peacekeeping: The Case for

## Possible Advantages

### Geopolitical

Countries in the conflict region are more likely to have an interest in finding solutions to the conflict because of such factors as economic interdependence, political alliances, mutual historical ties, and the closeness and informality of their relations. The sense of 'ownership' that Member States feel in a RA encourages a greater sense of legitimacy in its deliberations and decisions.<sup>48</sup> In addition, some authors have expressed serious doubts whether the UN decision-making process adequately represents the interest of all local and regional actors in a number of contemporary conflicts.<sup>49</sup> The representatives of the League of Arab States, for example, complain constantly that the UN Security Council does not deal with regional organizations on an equal footing, tending to listen more to some organizations while ignoring others.<sup>50</sup>

### Greater Legitimacy

RA Member States are often more sensitive to a border conflict or civil unrest in a neighboring country, and therefore are more likely to attempt to find a solution to a crisis. Following a similar logic, parties involved in a dispute might be more amenable to the use of local peacekeeping forces because of their familiarity with the root causes of the conflict. Reflected in the frequent calls for 'Arab' or 'African' solutions to regional conflicts before international intervention is invoked, this argument is based on the notion that governments and people in a region have a natural affinity with each other and an inherent suspicion of what is perceived as outside intervention. In addition, actions by a RA may be seen as more legitimate by subnational groups and others in the conflict. Thus, one might expect that the operation would run more smoothly, with the peacekeeping force subject to less controversy or attack.<sup>51</sup>

### Proximity to Conflict Zones

Due to their geographical proximity to a dispute, RA Member States may be more compelled to act. The assumption is that RA Member States are more likely to be genuinely concerned with resolving a local conflict because it may spill across Member's border. The flow of refugees from the former Yugoslavia to Western Europe, for example, is often cited as one of the key factors that repeatedly prompted the EU and NATO to intervene in the bloody ethnic conflicts in the Balkans.<sup>52</sup> In addition, RA Member States are more likely to be aware of an escalation of tensions in a neighboring state at an earlier stage, and are consequently better able to provide early warning, information gathering and fact finding, all of which

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Complementary Efforts', *Peacekeeping & International Relations*, 251, 3, (May/June 1996), p. 9; Ian Martin, 'Is the Regionalization of Peace Operations Desirable?', in Pugh and Singh Sidhu (eds), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond*, pp. 47–54; Pugh, 'The World Order Politics of Regionalization'; Weiss, *Beyond UN Subcontracting: Task-Sharing with Regional Security Arrangement and Service-Providing NGOs*.

48 Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping'; Marnika, 'Regional Peacekeeping: The Case for Complementary Efforts', p. 10.

49 Cyrus Samii and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, 'Strengthening Regional Approaches to Peace Operations', in Pugh and Singh Sidhu (eds), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond*, p. 259.

50 Alex J. Bellamy and Paul Williams, 'Conclusion: What Future for Peace Operations? Brahimi and Beyond', *International Peacekeeping*, 11, 1, (Spring 2004), p. 195.

51 Alex J. Bellamy, Paul Williams and Stuart Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), p. 214; Paul F. Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 124; Marnika, 'Regional Peacekeeping: The Case for Complementary Efforts', p. 10.

52 See, for example, Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, pp. 173–178.

are critical to the success of any PKO. Last but not least, they should also be able to deploy and supply personnel in a PKO more quickly than an outside nation.<sup>53</sup>

## Common Culture

According to Jones and Duffey, the 'lack of understanding of local and regional cultures by the UN has often jeopardized the success of peacekeeping operations and resulted in detrimental effects on local societies.'<sup>54</sup> A possible advantage for regional peacekeeping operations is that the support given to them by disputants and local populations will be greater than for UN operations. For example, Cyrus Samii and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu argue that the experience of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan 'revealed conditions under which the cosmopolitanism that the UN embodies was not an advantage.'<sup>55</sup> They point out specifically that 'cultural considerations were significant in the decision to have Turkey take the helm of the ISAF after Britain ended its term in June 2002,' arguing that 'such cultural consideration may give a specific advantage to regional actors.'<sup>56</sup> This is because the common culture found in some RAs can advance consensus, make intervention more acceptable to the disputants, and provide greater insight into local problems and the root causes of conflict. Furthermore, with a greater understanding of local culture, RAs are better equipped to involve local NGOs and elicit indigenous resources to help find a solution to the conflict.<sup>57</sup>

## Greater Consensus

RAs are thought to have an advantage over global organizations because their membership tends to be more homogeneous. This is because states in a RA are more likely to be at a similar development level, have similar historical roots, share some ethnic or tribal roots, and have similar political outlooks flowing from facing common regional problems. These commonalities are in turn supposed to provide more consensus among Member States, which makes the authorization of peacekeeping operations easier. This should ensure both more PKOs and their timely authorization.<sup>58</sup> According to this logic, it is hardly surprising that NATO, an organization with an exceptionally homogeneous membership, conducted more fully-fledged PKOs than any other RA in the past decade (see Table 1).

## Conflict Resolution

Regional PKOs may be better at promoting conflict resolution than the UN, which according to Diehl 'has tended to put peacekeeping operations in place as band-aid solutions to security problems, with limited follow-up diplomatic efforts.'<sup>59</sup> This is because RAs are more concerned with resolving the underlying causes of a local conflict, the implications of which are

53 Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, p. 214; Diehl, 'Institutional Alternatives to Traditional UN Peacekeeping'; Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping: The UN & Regional Organizations', p. 7.

54 Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping', p. 7.

55 Samii and Singh Sidhu, 'Strengthening Regional Approaches to Peace Operations', p. 259.

56 Samii and Singh Sidhu, 'Strengthening Regional Approaches to Peace Operations', p. 259.

57 Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping', p. 7, full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9307235003>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

58 Diehl, 'Institutional Alternatives to Traditional UN Peacekeeping', full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9307235003>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

59 Diehl, 'Institutional Alternatives to Traditional U.N. Peacekeeping'.

usually important to Member States in the area. As a consequence, RAs tend to more closely tie the stationing of peacekeeping troops with a mechanism (e.g. negotiations, good offices) or an actual plan (e.g. elections) for resolving the dispute.<sup>60</sup> The original four-pillar structure of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo—with NATO providing troops to ensure security, the EU taking the lead on reconstruction and economic development, the OSCE in charge of democratization and institution building, and the UN in charge of civil administration—represents a good example of such holistic conflict resolution strategy.<sup>61</sup>

## Restraint of Third Parties

Another possible advantage of regional peacekeeping forces is that they may be better able to secure the support of interested third-party states. This is because, unlike in many UN PKOs, interested third-party states will almost certainly participate in debate over and authorization of a regional peacekeeping operation. In this way, according to Diehl, 'the third party state has a better chance of modifying the operation according to its views and is more likely to support the operation because of the participation in its founding.'<sup>62</sup> Perhaps most importantly, however, it is less likely to sabotage the peacekeeping operation. One may also presume that active third-party opposition to a peacekeeping force would prevent that force from ever being approved by a RA, thus avoiding the embarrassing failures that have been experienced by some UN operations.<sup>63</sup>

## Emergence of New Actors

An adequate response to intrastate conflicts requires dealing with a host of actors. This is often difficult because state structures occasionally collapse and negotiations no longer simply involve governmental representatives but also include faction leaders, splinter groups, clan elders, community leaders, and so forth. Serious consideration of the role of these actors is essential if a permanent peace is to be achieved and RAs are often uniquely positioned to take such considerations into account.<sup>64</sup>

## The Only Option Left

In some cases, parties to a conflict may prefer the involvement of a RA rather than the UN (e.g. Russia preferring the OSCE to the UN in Chechnya, or the United States preferring NATO in Afghanistan). Alternatively, in cases where the UN has declined to intervene (e.g. the UN Security Council's negative response to requests for PKOs in Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville and Liberia after the tragic October 1993 events in Mogadishu), a regional PKO may be the only option available to the local parties.<sup>65</sup>

## Possible Disadvantages

The previous paragraphs indicate that regional PKOs appear to offer a number of advantages over their UN counterparts, primarily due to the following factors: proximity to conflict

60 Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, p. 214; Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, p. 125.

61 For more information about United Nations Mission in Kosovo, see United Nations, *UNMIK*, (2001), <<http://www.unmikonline.org/index.html>> (accessed 29 October 2005).

62 Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, p. 126.

63 Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, pp. 125–126.

64 Jones and Duffey, 'Sharing the Burden of Peacekeeping', p. 7.

65 Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, p. 214.

zones, common culture, greater legitimacy, promotion of long-term conflict resolution, restraint of both existing and emerging spoilers, greater consensus generation at the local level, and greater support of interested third parties. Regional PKOs, however, should not be seen as a panacea because '[t]he oft-cited advantages ascribed to regionally-based institutions and actors are both reinforced and contradicted by experience.'<sup>66</sup> The following paragraphs are meant to illustrate this point by summarizing the key disadvantages of peacekeeping operation conducted by RAs.

## Lack of Resources

One of the largest impediments to regional peacekeeping is an RA's lack of financing and adequate logistical resources. With the possible exceptions of the EU and—if it can be treated as a RA—NATO, existing regional organizations tend to operate with relatively small budgets, and lack the administrative, logistical and command-structures necessary for larger-scale, sustainable PKOs. In 2001, for example, the OAU's total budget was about US\$30 million with most states in arrears and with peace operations funded on a voluntary basis.<sup>67</sup> Consequentially, there is a strong risk that the UN's traditional problems with soliciting sufficient finances, troops and other contributions will be magnified in regional PKOs. This risk appears to be particularly high in Africa, where existing political and security organizations have relatively few resources and encounter 'great obstacles in filling the void created by Security Council inaction.'<sup>68</sup> In addition, recent analyses indicate that since 11 September 2001, when the fight against international terrorism moved to the top of the agendas of most RAs, scarce resources are being diverted increasingly away from other regional security activities, including PKOs.<sup>69</sup>

## Lack of Experience

Most, if not all, RAs lack a set of procedures and precedents on how to organize and operate a PKO. As Diehl notes, '[t]he United Nations is successful in its ad hoc arrangements, in part, because of its experience in running previous operations.'<sup>70</sup> In contrast, RAs 'simply have not had enough experience to establish such an institutional memory'<sup>71</sup> and the few precedents established thus far do not necessarily provide methods that should be repeated.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, several RAs still do not have explicit provisions in their Charters for conducting PKOs.<sup>73</sup>

66 Job, 'The UN, Regional Organizations, and Regional Conflict: Is There a Viable Role for the UN?', p. 235.

67 In contrast, NATO's military budget for 2001 was US\$716 million: Job, 'The UN, Regional Organizations, and Regional Conflict: Is There a Viable Role for the UN?' p. 236.

68 Eric G. Berman and Katie E. Sams, 'The Limits of Regional Peacekeeping in Africa', *Peacekeeping & International Relations*, 28, 4, (July/August 1999), pp. 1–2.

69 Bellamy and Williams, 'Conclusion: What Future for Peace Operations? Brahimi and Beyond' p. 194, full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9307235003>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

70 Diehl, 'Institutional Alternatives to Traditional UN Peacekeeping', full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9609305129>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

71 Marnika, 'Regional Peacekeeping: The Case for Complementary Efforts', full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=1458919>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

72 Some authors have, for example, maintained that ECOWAC's bloody peacekeeping 'intervention' in Liberia 'did not do justice to the term peacekeeping.' Among other things, they point out to the fact that, after widespread looting and uncontrolled black market activity by ECOMOG forces, the locals in Liberia put new words to the ECOMOG acronym: "Every Car or Movable Object Gone!" Dorn, 'Regional Peacekeeping Is Not the Way'.

73 Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, p. 215, full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=1458919>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

## Lack of Impartiality

RAs and their Member States tend to see conflicts in their regions 'through the colored glasses of narrow national or regional self-interest,' which in turn implies that they may be part of the problem, not part of the solution.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, few RAs have sufficient numbers of personnel trained in peacekeeping techniques and philosophy, which means that their peacekeeping forces would probably be composed of regular soldiers from national armies. Such forces may have a difficulty meeting the neutrality standard established by the UN, especially if they are not able to draw the bulk of their troops from outside of the immediate conflict neighborhood. As Diehl argues, '[t]he smaller the area and the fewer the members of the regional organization, the more difficult it will be to put together a neutral force.'<sup>75</sup> Other observers have pointed out that existing regional military alliances could also occasionally complicate the problem of impartiality. For example, NATO, which includes both Greece and Turkey, would probably find it quite difficult to conduct a PKO in Cyprus.<sup>76</sup>

## Regional Hegemons

Regional PKOs are unlikely to be authorized in conflicts that directly involve a major regional power or hegemon. No RA has the political clout or resources to mount an operation that is opposed, or not actively supported, by the most powerful member(s). Even if one was authorized, the hegemon(s) could 'effectively sabotage the mission through direct action or covertly through intermediate actors.'<sup>77</sup> Alternatively, some observers warn that RAs often become too dependent on their most powerful Member States to provide resources for their PKOs, thus leading to a situation where larger, wealthier states (e.g. Nigeria in the Economic Community of West African States, South Africa in the South African Development Community, Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent States and, arguably, the United States in NATO) become dominant politically because of their role.<sup>78</sup> This may not always be a desirable, because the motives of regional PKOs led by ambitious regional powers tend to be quite questionable.<sup>79</sup>

## External Threats

RAs generally do not possess the influence, resources, moral suasion, or means of coercion to convince external powers to cooperate in a PKO. This is a major limitation because the acquiescence, if not cooperation, of all relevant third parties is a crucial prerequisite for success of any PKO. As Diehl argues, '[t]he advantage that regional organizations have in bringing in interested third party states is lost if those states are at the heart of the conflict and are external to the region.'<sup>80</sup>

74 Dorn, 'Regional Peacekeeping Is Not the Way', full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9307235003>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

75 Diehl, 'Institutional Alternatives to Traditional UN Peacekeeping', full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=1458919>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

76 Dorn, 'Regional Peacekeeping Is Not the Way', full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9307235003>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

77 Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=960930512977>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

78 Marnika, 'Regional Peacekeeping: The Case for Complementary Efforts', full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=1458919>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

79 Dorn, 'Regional Peacekeeping Is Not the Way', full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <<http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9307235003>> (accessed 6 December 2004).

80 Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*.

## Incomplete and Uneven Geographic Coverage

The coverage of RAs that could potentially engage in peacekeeping operations is highly uneven across the globe. To begin with, existing RAs do not cover all areas of the world. Consequentially, as noted earlier, in a number of conflict-prone areas, such as the Middle East or the Indian–Pakistani border, there are no RAs capable of conducting PKOs. In such areas, ‘subcontracting the UN’s responsibilities to the regional level could have disastrous effects.’<sup>81</sup> Secondly, due to the lack of peacekeeping capabilities of most RAs, there is no guarantee that there will enough regional PKOs, even in those regions where RAs exist. In the recent crisis in Darfur, for example, the African Union was willing but unable to act quickly and effectively entirely on its own. As the organization’s chairman Olusegun Obasanjo told the UN Security Council in September 2004, the African Union’s troop force in this strife-torn region of Sudan ‘needs greater international funding and logistical support if it is to successfully carry out its task of protecting civilians there.’<sup>82</sup>

## Negative Perceptions

Regional peacekeeping forces may be unwelcome by local populations because of historical or current perceptions. As Dorn notes, one of the reasons that the OAS backed down on peacekeeping in Central America in the late 1980s ‘was the perception in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala and others in the region that the OAS was largely controlled by the US, with its history of support for dictatorships in the region.’<sup>83</sup> On a similar note, Japanese-led or Chinese-led peacekeeping forces in Asia would be unwelcome because of historical experiences. Alternatively, in Africa ‘it is hypocritical of Nigeria to talk about creating democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone, when it has none at home.’<sup>84</sup>

## Lack of Authority

As already discussed, the authority of RAs to launch PKOs without the UN Security Council’s blessing has always been questionable. While several RAs have acted without an explicit UN mandate, or sought one only *ex post*, the language of the UN Charter clearly does not give any RA the authority to do so. Moreover, according to Bellamy and Williams, ‘such behaviour suggests that these organizations are less intermediary structures in the UN’s collective security system than local agents of the regional hegemon in question.’<sup>85</sup> Some scholars have even suggested that the premise of RA’s such as NATO is ‘with capacity but without legitimacy.’<sup>86</sup>

81 Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, p. 215.

82 UN News Service, ‘AU Force in Sudan Needs More Backing, Nigeria’s President Tells Security Council’, UN News Center, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/storyAr.asp?NewsID=12043&Cr=sudan&Cr1=&Kw1=Force&Kw2=AU&Kw3=Nigerian>, (accessed 24 September 2004), full text available online through Academic Search Premier, <http://search.epnet.com.lib-proxy.nd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=1458919>.

83 Dorn, ‘Regional Peacekeeping Is Not the Way’, UN News Service, ‘AU Force in Sudan Needs More Backing, Nigeria’s President Tells Security Council’, UN News Center, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/storyAr.asp?NewsID=12043&Cr=sudan&Cr1=Force&Kw1=AU&Kw2=AU&Kw3=Nigerian>, (accessed 24 September 2004), (accessed 6 December 2004).

84 Dorn, ‘Regional Peacekeeping Is Not the Way’.

85 Bellamy and Williams, ‘Conclusion: What Future for Peace Operations? Brahimi and Beyond’, p. 194.

86 Mary McKenzie, ‘The UN and Regional Organizations’, in Edward Newman and Oliver P. Richmond (eds), *The United Nations and Human Security*, (London: Palgrave, 2001), p. 165.



## Ethical Dilemmas

Some observers point out that the idea of a regional approach to global security was raised, discussed in detail, and rejected during the debates that led to the UN's creation, primarily for fear of encouraging semi-imperial spheres of influence.<sup>87</sup> Even today, as Marrack Goulding contends, there exists a strong ethical argument against regionalization of PKOs:

The United Nations was intended to be a universal organization. Its services are available to all its members on a basis of equality and at the expense of the membership as a whole in accordance with each state's ability to pay. It would be contrary to this vision to insist that member states in a particular region should receive only the level of peacekeeping that their regional organization can provide.<sup>88</sup>

On a similar note, Bellamy and Williams warn that the current trend towards regionalization risks creating two classes of peace operations: 'one where Western states perceive their vital interests to be at stake and where large amounts of resources are deployed,' and another class of operations where 'Western states are only symbolically engaged and the familiar problems suffered by some of the less auspicious operations of the 1990s remain.'<sup>89</sup>

### *Advantages versus Disadvantages: A Balance Sheet*

As should be clear from the previous sections on the advantages and disadvantages of RAs, there are two sides to the debate about the regionalization of PKOs. On the one hand, regional PKOs appear to offer a number of advantages over their UN counterparts, primarily due to proximity to conflict zones, common culture, and greater legitimacy. Perhaps most importantly, regional PKOs may be better positioned to promote long-term conflict resolution by restraining both existing and emerging spoilers, and generating greater consensus at the local level. Additionally, at the regional level, RA peacekeeping forces may be better positioned to secure the support of interested third-party states. Finally, in at least some conflicts, regional peacekeeping may be the only feasible and/or available option left.

On the other hand, past experiences with regional PKOs suggest that there are significant problems with the idea of regionalization as an optimum mechanism for organizing PKOs. It is apparent that most RAs lack the resources, experience and, some would argue, even the authority and legitimacy to conduct PKOs on their own. Many experts have also warned that RAs are too often excessively dependent on the most powerful Member State(s), which implies that regional PKOs are unlikely to be truly politically neutral. RAs also generally do not possess enough influence to convince external powers to cooperate in a PKO and their geographic coverage remains highly uneven. Last, but not least, regionalization of peacekeeping raises a number of intriguing ethical dilemmas, such as the creation of 'two classes' of PKOs.

## **Conclusion: To Complement and Enhance, or Rivals to and Replacements for, UN Peacekeeping?**

While the findings of this analysis indicate that regionalization of PKOs may not always and everywhere produce desirable outcomes, they nonetheless suggest that RAs have the potential to play a more constructive role in strengthening international peacekeeping efforts. Since the early 1990s, peacekeeping has acquired a stronger regional dimension virtually

87 Morris and McCoubrey, 'Regional Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era', p. 133.

88 Marrack Goulding, *Peamonger*, (London: John Murray, 2002), p. 218.

89 Bellamy and Williams, 'Conclusion: What Future for Peace Operations? Brahimi and Beyond', p. 196.

everywhere it is practiced. RAs play increasingly significant roles as intermediary structures in some parts of the world. Given the persistence of a capabilities–expectations gap in UN peacekeeping operations, the regional option should not be overlooked. By sharing some of the responsibilities for maintenance of international peace and security with RAs, the UN may be able to fulfill its core duties more effectively.

At the same time, the UN needs to overcome a number of disadvantages with PKOs conducted by RAs. The extent to which any shortcomings are identified and resolved will depend in part on how the UN answers a number of questions:

1. How can PKOs benefit from a positive commitment to and understanding of regional actors for one of their own?
2. How can it be ensured that those who face the realities of implementing peace settlements are fully represented in the process of negotiating peace?
3. How can PKOs avoid competition, duplication, confusion, and inefficiency and maximise benefits from RAs?
4. Can the UN ensure that regional peacekeepers respect international human rights obligations and are properly accountable for their responsibility to do so?
5. With an increasing number of actors, can the cumulative experience of PKOs be institutionalized and the professionalism of each dimension enhanced?<sup>90</sup>

Since none of these challenges are addressed adequately in any existing major UN and/or RA report, serious doubts remain over whether the need and desire for cooperation between the UN and RAs will ultimately translate into a workable, efficient system.

Time will tell whether regional peacekeeping represents a viable option for complementing and/or enhancing UN peacekeeping. While there is little doubt that at least some RAs possess the capabilities that UN PKOs need (and currently often lack), there is little consensus on how far regionalization of peacekeeping should be permitted to extend. The danger is that if it extends too far too fast, regional peacekeeping may become a substitute for, rather than enhancement of, UN action. As such, regional PKOs could become another serious challenge to the existing system of collective security where the UN has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. In such a scenario, instead of helping to bridge the existing UN peacekeeping capabilities–expectations gap, regional PKOs would merely siphon off scarce resources and divert political support away from their UN counterparts. Thus, whatever peacekeeping roles the RAs eventually take on in the future, it is imperative that they are clearly defined to ensure the authority of and enhanced cooperation with the UN as the desired mechanism for maintaining international peace and security.

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90 Martin, 'Is the Regionalization of Peace Operations Desirable?' p. 54.

