THE UNITED NATIONS:

From Its Formation to Present Day Peace-Keeping Operations

written by Ryan Jacobs
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"If the United Nations once admits that international disputes can be settled by using force, then we will have destroyed the foundation of the organization and our best hope of establishing a world order." ~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

THE FORMATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The concept of establishing an international organization in order to create peace universally goes as far back as Immanuel Kant's argument in Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch, in 1795. As Kant described:

- Peoples, as states, like individuals, may be judged to injure one another merely by their coexistence in the state of nature (i.e., while independent of external laws). Each of them, may and should for the sake of its own security demand that the others enter with it into a constitution similar to the civil constitution, for under such a constitution each can be secure in his right. This would be a league of nations, but it would not have to be a state consisting of nations. That would be contradictory, since a state implies the relation of a superior (legislating) to an inferior (obeying), i.e., the people, and many nations in one state would then constitute only one nation. This contradicts the presupposition, for here we have to weigh the rights of nations against each other so far as they are distinct states and not amalgamated into one(1).

The influence of Kant's proposition was highly influential following WWI. After alliances began to wage war that was obviously only going to escalate, as long as there was no international organization formed to distinguish the possibility of global domination by a single nations militaristic agenda, forty two founding members quickly assembled.

Although WWI only brought more issues at hand, internationally the formation of the League of Nations was essential in providing a stage for international peace-building operations. In the intermission of the world wars, the League of Nations (headed by the allied powers) created a plan coined the "mandate system" in order to supervise German colonies.
Consequently, the blame put on Germany did nothing but stir the pot. The ineffectiveness of the League of Nations during its short time, brought about the United Nations in 1945.

The main purpose of the creation of the United Nations (UN) was to put a stop to war after the end of WWII. Also, to strengthen the cooperation of nation-states through the formation of an international organization (similar to the League of Nations) by maintaining peace-building operations, human rights, economic and social development, humanitarian and natural disaster aid, environmental issues, and preventing armed conflict.

**STRUCTURE & LEGAL PERSONALITY**

Today, the UN is the legal basis for collective security. Consisting of six principal organs (The General Assembly, Security Council, International Court of Justice, Secretariat, Economic and Social Council, and the United Nations Trusteeship Council), the UN has developed into a main source of international law.

According to UN's website on the Peace-building Commission (PBC), "The Peace-building Commission plays a unique role in (1) bringing together all of the relevant actors, including international donors, the international financial institutions, national governments, troop contributing countries; (2) marshalling resources and (3) advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peace-building and recovery and where appropriate, highlighting any gaps that threaten to undermine peace(1)." The current states that are on the PBC's agenda include Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and the Central African Republic. The UN affirms responsibility of resolving all issues regarding conflict throughout the world. They also claim that it is their duty to protect the people of every state
from any sort of threat by a different state, their own government, and from all individual with each state's borders.

In addition, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has played a major role in making the UN a main actor in influencing international law. As one of the six branches of the UN, the ICJ has worked cases regarding interstate issues such as environmental problems (such as the Uruguay and Argentina pulp mill dispute), addressed problems concerning border disputes (such as Israel's West Bank Wall), and has made significant progress establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) since the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals. These tribunals influenced many state's desire to have an international court to hear cases regarding genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. There have also been mention of state's desires to include illegal drug trafficking. The purpose of these desires, and the creation of the ICC is because of the insufficiently conducted tribunals, and the structure itself.

THE UN'S MISSIONS IN AFRICA

The majority of the UN's greatest achievements have been in Africa. This continent has historically been a place of civil war, colonization, slavery, genocide, famine, and utter destruction. Since 1960, the UN has worked in Africa to provide peace-building operations in order to put an end to such atrocities. In the first ten years alone, sixteen African states joined the UN. Peacekeeping forces have been deployed to the Congo, Cyprus, Namibia, Sudan, Somalia, and Rwanda (just to name a few).
Although in some cases, such as Somalia (with the infamous "Black Hawk down") and the Rwandan genocide, things did not go very well (due to the sheer power of rebels, corrupt governments, and lack of knowledge); there has been a significant amount of growth in Africa, as a whole.

In Sierra Leone, international assistance stopped the flow of blood diamonds, militaristic governance, and needless amputation of nearly all of the slave workers. The International Court of Justice has been working towards the criminal cases of all involved in the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

In the Congo, as well as Cyprus, the UN has lead some of its longest and finest peace-building operations since its initial creation in 1945. All of these beneficial products of the UN have empowered international organizations, ran by state players in an effort to benefit the rules of law at an international level.