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**The Origins of the Soviet-American
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Peacekeeping: 1942-1948**

BY

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The Origins of the Soviet-American Conflict Over United Nations Peacekeeping: 1942-1948

by

Peter J. Geib *

The United States and the Soviet Union have consistently opposed each other over the nature of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The purpose of this brief study is to analyze and explain the origins of this conflict. One of the principal elements in this discussion was the debate in the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations. There are few if any scholarly treatments of the disagreements in the MSC viewed against the broader variables influencing the positions of the two countries on peacekeeping forces. Thus, this aspect of the question is prominent in the following examination.

At the core of the American and Soviet attitudes toward the concept of an international force, whether it is considered in terms of an *ad hoc* collective security force or the later vision of an international police force, is the question of national sovereignty. In the early years of the United Nations, U.S. representatives perceived protection of sovereignty in substantially different terms than did Soviet representatives. The United States could clearly count on the influence of its traditional great power allies and a clearly sympathetic numerical majority (John Stoessinger has called it the "hidden veto") to support its traditional interests. Thus, as the analysis will show, the United States viewed the protection of its interests and the idea of a peacekeeping force in broader terms than did the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union has consistently been suspicious of the attempts of other nations to expand the activities of the United Nations in terms of an international peacekeeping force. The Soviets have based their position on what Alexander Dallin calls an almost "obsessive" concern for national sovereignty. This sensitivity has been reflected primarily in the Soviet insistence on complete unanimity and, in turn, on the absolute veto. Following World War II this attitude was reflected most dramatically whenever a member of the UN suggested a means of implementing article 43 of the Charter or establishing any type of international force. This is not to say that in terms of international law the

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Soviet position was wrong. A strict constructionist interpretation of the Charter might well lead one to the conclusion that the Soviet position was correct. In view of the postwar power of the United States and its ready-made UN majority, the Soviet position can be understood.

The Postwar Political Context

Certain political and historical circumstances form the framework for Soviet and American attitudes toward an international peacekeeping force. At the time of the Soviet Revolution immediately following 1917, the Western powers, including the United States, showed hostility by attempts at direct military intervention. Germany pushed in from the west and forced on the Soviet Union the humiliating treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918. France and Britain provided financial support for counter-revolutionaries and landed troops in the south and north. The United States also intervened in the east and north. On the Soviet Union's eastern border, Japan attempted to take advantage of the civil war confusion and make territorial gains. With the consolidation of the revolution, there followed a long period in which the USSR stood isolated and suspected in world politics. When the end of this political isolation came in 1939, it was forced on the Soviets by Nazi Germany.

The Soviet concern with sovereignty has been based in great part on their perception of the German problem. Germany invaded the Soviet Union twice in the first half of the twentieth century. There can be no doubt that the primary Soviet reason for supporting a postwar world organization was that it might be used to thwart future German aggression. At the closing plenary session of the United Nations Conference on International Organization in 1945, Gromyko quoted Stalin as saying, that to nip German aggression in the bud, the nations must establish a special organization for the defense of peace and the insurance of security and place at this organization's disposal the maximum quantity of armed forces sufficient for the suppression of aggression.¹ According to Isaac Deutscher, Stalin was obsessed with the idea of future German aggression. Shortly before the Yalta Conference, Stalin stated:

It would be naive to think that Germany will not attempt to restore her might and launch new aggression History shows that a short period - - some twenty or thirty years - - is enough for Germany to recover from defeat and re-establish her might.²

¹ United Nations Information Organizations, *Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization* (New York, 1945), I, 694.

² Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin* (London: Oxford Press, 1949), p. 538.

Evidence of Stalin's attitude lies in his proposal to cripple German industry, to change Germany's frontiers, to detach Germany from Austria, and to establish pro-Russian governments in Eastern Europe.³

In addition to the German question, the USSR and the U.S. clearly viewed international organization from different ideological perspectives. The U.S. perceived support for the UN as a manifestation of worldwide support for the concept and institutions of parliamentary government. Indeed, some U.S. representatives viewed the UN as an integral aspect of the world government movement. The western powers emphasized the traditional tenets of international law within the framework of a political structure dominated by classical Western liberal democratic principles.

This globalization of Western values, at least as the Soviets under Stalin's leadership understood them, was unacceptable. The Soviet Union considered itself unique in world history, a national elite with a special responsibility to lead the way to a new world order. One of the primary problems in the Soviet view of the UN in the Stalin era, as well as currently, has been the tension between Soviet impulses toward "universality and exclusiveness," between the old and new. From the beginning, the Bolsheviks have been required to stand alone and to limit their movement to an elite group of professional revolutionaries. On the other hand, these professionals have sought to identify with the masses. According to Alexander Dallin, "a sense of leftist uniqueness, superiority, and mission has clashed with a rightist effort to identify with the majority of mankind."⁴

Moreover, orthodox Marxist ideology suggests that international organizations and the traditional types of diplomacy represent the "old way" and are thus destined for the "garbage heap" of history. The principles of proletarian internationalism will supposedly replace traditional forms of international law which Marxism predicts will collapse with the destruction of the capitalist foundation.⁵ The Soviet interpretation of Marxism suggests that the UN is a tool in the struggle between socialist and capitalist powers.

An important dimension of the ideological aspect is that in 1947 the Soviets viewed national sovereignty as the most important weapon in the conflict over competing ideas. At an organizational meeting of the Cominform in September 1947, Soviet representative Andre Zhdanov stated:

One of the lines taken by the ideological campaign that goes hand in hand with the plans for the enslavement of Europe is an

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Alexander Dallin, *The Soviet Union at the United Nations* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

attack on the principle of national sovereignty, an appeal for the renouncement of the sovereign rights of nations, to which is opposed the idea of world government. The purpose of this campaign is to mask the unbridled expansion of American imperialism which is ruthlessly violating the sovereign rights of nations . . . The idea of world government has been taken up by bourgeois intellectual cranks and pacifists . . . The Soviet Union and the new democracies are a reliable bulwark against encroachment in the equality and self-determination of nations. ⁶

Finally, Stalin made it clear that the fears about the West stemming from the Civil War, the question of Germany, and concern about the outcome of the political-ideological dispute would be mitigated by institutionalizing national sovereignty. Sovereignty would be upheld through the principles of unanimity and the veto. On November 6, 1944, Stalin addressed the Soviet people and explained that the new organization "will be effective if the great powers, which have borne on their shoulders the main burden of the war, will act in the future also in the spirit of unanimity and concord. It will not be effective if these essential conditions are violated." ⁷ In September of 1947 before the General Assembly, Deputy Foreign Minister Vyshinsky combined a strong attack on alleged U.S. and British violations of the Charter guarantees respecting sovereignty with a more specific statement of Stalin's ideas. He declared that the United Nations could be strengthened only if the great powers adhere to the basic principles which include respect for the political and economic independence of peoples and "consistent and absolute observance" of the principle of great power agreement and unanimity. ⁸

How did U.S. representatives perceive the problem of sovereignty and its relationship to international peacekeeping? To be sure, all the major powers were concerned with maintaining their freedom of action. When Cordell Hull was faced with the problem of explaining the postwar organization to leading senators, he explained that the U.S. suggested the veto power for its own benefit. ⁹ In addition, he believed that the United States would not have anywhere near the popular support needed for the organization if the veto were not included. ¹⁰

Hull's attitude was not entirely representative of the thinking among U.S. representatives. Early in 1942, the United States made it

⁶ Rupert Emerson and Inis L. Claude, "The Soviet Union in the United Nations," *Readings in Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. Arthur Adams (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1961), p. 271.

⁷ *International Conciliation*, 406 (December, 1944), p. 814.

⁸ United Nations, General Assembly, *Official Records*, 2nd session, 84th plenary meeting (September 18, 1947), p. 90.

⁹ *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), II, 1662.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

quite clear that it conceived of any postwar organization as one capable of carrying out its decisions with force if necessary. The U.S. Department of State went so far as to suggest that any new organization should involve the abolishment of the concept of unanimity.¹¹ In other instances, the U.S. has at least appeared willing to thoroughly consider the elimination of unanimity. Before the General Assembly in 1947, Representative Marshall of the U.S. expressed concern that the exercise of the veto might hamper the UN's most important activities. He explained that although in the past the U.S. had been reluctant to change the voting procedures, it would "be willing to accept, by whatever means may be appropriate, the elimination of the unanimity requirement with respect to matters arising under Chapter VI of the Charter, and such matters as application for membership."¹² It is important in this context to underline that the U.S. could count on the support of its traditional political allies as well as a certain numerical majority in the General Assembly. Moreover, the U.S. never went so far as to abolish the veto power in its presentation of draft Charters to the UN conference. It is fair to conclude that the discussion of the abolishment of the veto never generated hard support at the highest level of U.S. decision-making. Nevertheless, there is a perceptible difference in the Soviet view of sovereignty and the American view.

The Soviet-American Dispute Over UN Peacekeeping at the War Conferences

One can best trace the origins of the dispute regarding international peacekeeping machinery by comparing Soviet-American attitudes on the Atlantic Charter, the Moscow and Teheran Declarations, Dumbarton Oaks, and the Yalta Conference. The San Francisco Conference will be analyzed later.

In August 1941 with the declaration of the Atlantic Charter by Churchill and Roosevelt, the goal of a postwar system of general security was established. The eighth point of the joint declaration states in part:

Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential.¹³

¹¹ U.S., Department of State, *Post-war Foreign Policy Preparation: 1939-1945*, No. 3580 (1949), p. 458.

¹² United Nations, General Assembly, *Official Records*, 2nd session, 82nd plenary meeting (September 17, 1947), p. 25.

¹³ Winston Churchill, *The Grand Alliance* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1950), pp. 443-444.

What was the initial Soviet reaction to these general principles? Stalin's immediate concern was for territorial rights. As early as 1941, Stalin sought assurances for postwar frontiers particularly *vis a vis* Germany.¹⁴ But the Soviets gave formal adherence to the Charter in September 1941 in part because it included clauses which emphasized that the signatories sought no aggrandizement, territorial or otherwise, and that they wished to see no territorial changes that did not accord with the principles of self-determination.¹⁵

Churchill sent Anthony Eden to Moscow in December of 1941 to consider the framework for aid to the USSR and to discuss the problem of postwar international peacekeeping. Stalin would talk of little else but postwar territorial boundaries. He suggested the Soviet borders should be restored to their pre-war positions with the Curzon Line as the basis of its frontier with Poland. The major suggested alterations were the inclusion of the Baltic states and portions of Finland, Poland, and Rumania within the USSR.¹⁶ Stalin also proposed the restoration of Austria as an independent state, the detachment of the Rhine from Germany, an independent Bavarian state, and the reconstruction of the pre-war Balkan states.¹⁷ Perhaps unsurprisingly, these territorial designs conform to the World War I Czarist objectives for Eastern Europe. After much pressure was applied to the Soviets by the British and the Americans, the proposed Anglo-Soviet accord which would have included these arrangements was signed without the territorial provisions. The territorial problems of the moment, a manifestation of the Soviet concern for sovereignty, were solved. The Soviets, with the rest of the allies, would put their trust in the postwar system to provide the security they needed.

The Moscow Conference of late 1943 provides further insights into the developing dispute over the relationship of sovereignty to a mechanism for enforcing international security. Moscow was primarily concerned with establishing a date for the allied invasion of Europe.¹⁸ The Soviets considered all other discussion secondary. But Cordell Hull placed emphasis on the draft four-power declaration which was considered the initial step to a stable international world after the conflict.¹⁹ The substance of the declaration is contained in the fourth provision which read

that they recognize the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organization, based on the

¹⁴ Hull, II, 1170.

¹⁵ Churchill, p. 443.

¹⁶ Hull, II, 1166-1167.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Ruth B. Russell and Jeanette Muther, *A History of the United Nations Charter* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1958), p. 128.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states, and open to membership by all such states, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security."²⁰

The other topics on the agenda dealt with economic and political matters of postwar cooperation that were generally agreed upon.

With the signing of the "Four Power Declaration" at Moscow on October 30, 1945, the representatives of the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States (China had agreed earlier to the items on the draft), gave their first official notice that the postwar establishment of an international peacekeeping organization with a strong enforcement mechanism was a necessity. Hull asserted that the signing of the declaration ensured that both the U.S. and the USSR would be permanent members of the international organization.²¹

The Soviets disagreed with little of the declaration, but their minor objections were revealing. On paragraph two of the American draft, Molotov objected to the clause requiring the four powers to act together in "any occupation of enemy territory and of territory of other states held by the enemy."²² Molotov argued that this wording was unclear and might interfere with active military operations. No other state raised this objection. Eden argued that the clause might indeed be reworded, but that it was necessary to have a provision making it clear how the allies would cooperate in liberated territories if misunderstandings were to be avoided.²³ Finally, the whole clause was dropped due to the Soviet objection to a possible infringement on sovereign action.

The Teheran Conference marked the first time that Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin met to discuss the goals of war strategy. The formal sessions were dominated by military problems and primarily by Soviet pressure for a western commitment and commander to open a second front. One of the major political problems considered was the postwar peacekeeping machinery, and the Soviet position underlines Stalin's defensive attitude concerning the nature of the international security force problem.

In the Spring of 1943, Roosevelt conceived of the future international organization in terms of a four-power establishment that would police the world with the armed forces of the Soviet Union, Britain, China, and the United States. There were to be three main bodies: an assembly of all members of the United Nations, an executive committee which would deal with all nonmilitary questions, and the "Four Policemen" to deal with security problems.²⁴ Stalin's first concern was

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 977.

²¹ Hull, II, 1307.

²² Russell and Muther, p. 134.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 785.

whether the executive committee would be able to make decisions which would be binding on all nations. Stalin not only voiced concern for the sovereignty of the Soviet Union, but was also skeptical that Congress would let the United States accept such a plan.²⁵ Stalin expressed the opinion that China would not be accepted in Europe as a "policeman." Therefore, one committee should be established for Europe and one for the Far East. Roosevelt suggested that this was only a variation of Churchill's plan for establishing spheres of influence.²⁶ Stalin realized that the control of land armies making up a UN peacekeeping force in the area would be in Soviet hands.

Again the Soviet Union's major concern was the status of Germany. Stalin viewed the purpose of any UN peacekeeping force as providing a means of restraining Germany. He believed that Germany would recover power in fifteen to twenty years, and he suggested that restraints should be placed on Germany's manufacturing capacity. Churchill suggested more methods of restraining Germany "for at least fifty years," but, for the most part, Stalin felt that the suggestions were inadequate.²⁷ Stalin continually brought up the question of Germany at Teheran and at later conferences, and one receives the impression that nothing would have satisfied him.

At the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944, the plans for the future international organization were presented and discussed. The Soviet Union and the United States were in general agreement concerning the UN functions of maintaining peace and security. There was complete accord that the function of an international collective security force should be controlled by the Security Council and that the great powers were entitled to a special place on the Council because of their exceptional responsibilities for world peace. Thus, there was general agreement that the "Big Three" plus China and France would assume permanent seats on the Council while six temporary seats would be occupied by nations elected by the assembly every two years.²⁸ The four governments also agreed that each member of the Council that could do so would make contingents of national forces available to the Security Council for the purpose of enforcement.²⁹

The most important issue at Dumbarton Oaks, the issue that finally blocked agreement on the voting question and that best reveals the nature of the Soviet-American dispute over peacekeeping operations was whether a member of the Security Council could vote on matters in

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 786.

²⁷ Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1951), p. 361.

²⁸ United Nations Information Organizations, *Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization* (New York, 1945), III, 8. Hereafter cited as UNCIO Documents.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

which it was directly involved. This problem clearly and directly involved which nations would have the power of political decision-making over the use of internationalized armed forces. The USSR took the position that no great power should be required to abstain from voting when directly involved in a dispute.³⁰ Thus, the Soviets justified an absolute veto on the grounds that the great powers alone would have the power to enforce decisions and that the smaller states would accept this position. Furthermore, the Soviets suggested that perhaps the entire organization could best function if it were run solely by the great powers.³¹ The Soviets were sensitive on this issue because "in the Soviet view there were still powerful forces in the world which were bent on destroying the Soviet Union and a Soviet insistence on unanimity was a necessary safeguard against a powerful anti-Soviet coalition."³²

The representatives of the U.S. and Britain agreed on the necessity of unanimity on most substantive decisions because Security Council decisions might well include the use of a peacekeeping force. In contrast to the Soviet Union, they argued that in the matter of voting on pacific settlement of disputes the major powers must not demand unequal rights such as the absolute veto when they themselves were involved in the dispute.³³ British and U.S. delegates argued that most states would grant the major powers some special position in return for their acceptance of primary responsibility for security, but they would not go so far as to allow a complete veto.³⁴

This disagreement continued throughout the conference. Finally, Hull asked Gromyko if he would not transmit the American position directly to Stalin and obtain a response as quickly as possible. American delegates seemed ready to stake the success of the conference on the acceptance of its own legal traditions. The Soviets were as adamant as the Americans. Stalin considered absolute unanimity essential and had no intention of being outvoted on anything by a host of smaller powers.

Following the above exchange in early September of 1944, the technical experts in the formulation group at the conference attempted to work out a compromise formula that was also not accepted. The compromise formula continued to wave the principle of unanimity in reference to the pacific settlement of disputes, and once again Stalin would settle for nothing less than the absolute veto.³⁵ The voting issue was crucial. But the possibility of a breakdown of the conference

³⁰ Dwight Lee, "The Genesis of the Veto," *International Organization* (February 1947), p. 36.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³⁴ Russell and Muther, p. 447.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 449.

posed a great threat. Field Marshall Smuts, Churchill's adviser, pointed out the problem:

On the merits the principle of unanimity among the Great Powers has much to recommend it, at least for the years immediately following on this war. If this principle proves unworkable in practice the situation could subsequently be reviewed when mutual confidence has been established and a more workable basis laid down. A clash at the present juncture should be avoided at all costs. The principle of unanimity will at the worst only have the effect of a veto, of stopping action where it may be wise, or even necessary. But it will also render it impossible for Russia to embark on courses not approved of by the USA and the United Kingdom.³⁶

Nevertheless, no decision was reached. The heads of state decided to make a decision when they met again in the future.

The Soviet attitude toward the Dumbarton Oaks proposals is also revealed after the conference when the USSR submitted an amendment to the proposals. The amendment, submitted at the San Francisco Conference, re-emphasized the subordination of any peacekeeping action to the Security Council and thus to the veto. The amendment declares that no coercive action "may be taken under regional agreements without the authorization of the Security Council."³⁷ The other four governments agreed to the amendment, but it was a Soviet initiative.

The adamant position of the Soviets and the good advice of men like Field Marshall Smuts began to influence the official position of the United States. Formally, the official U.S. position had been one of requiring that a party to a dispute concerning pacific settlement could not vote. By December 1944, the President and the State Department agreed that the principle of unanimity in great part was a necessity. In the State Department view:

Our talks with member of Congress and groups and individuals throughout the country, indicate that its (unanimity) abandonment would gravely alienate many sincere supporters of the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals, and would provide perfectionists and isolationists with a powerful weapon against American participation in the organization.³⁸

³⁶ Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953), p. 211.

³⁷ UNCIO Documents, III, 601.

³⁸ U.S., Department of State, *Foreign Relations of U.S., Malta and Yalta Documents*, No. 6199 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), p. 86.

On the other hand, the United States was attempting to walk a fine line, because the State Department, in discussions with other American republics found "the strongest official opposition to the straight unanimity rule."³⁹ Thus, on December 5, 1944, the President offered the following voting guidelines as part of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals:

1. Each member of the Security Council should have one vote.
2. Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters should be made by an affirmative vote of seven members.
3. Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters should be made by an affirmative vote of seven members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decision under Chapter VIII, Section A and under the second sentence of paragraph 1 of Chapter VIII, Section C, (Dumbarton Oaks proposal) a party to a dispute *should abstain from voting*.⁴⁰

Essentially these proposals established the principle that the veto power would not apply in "procedural matters."

At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the USSR finally decided to accept the American proposal in return for the individual membership of two of their republics, the Ukraine and White Russia. Before the Yalta Conference the Soviets had rejected the proposal, but the final agreement at Yalta was a minor Soviet concession.

In connection with the American voting proposal was the hope that complete freedom of discussion could be established. The United States position was that

. . . our proposal recognizes the desirability of the permanent members frankly stating that the peaceful adjustment of any controversy which may arise is a matter of general world interest in which any sovereign member state involved should have a right to present its case.⁴¹

Stalin was hesitant to allow full and free discussion in the Council. Once again the concern for sovereign rights and the specter of German aggression became the main issue with the Soviets. Stalin feared that "full and friendly discussions" might lead to conflict among the three powers, which would allow renewed German aggression.⁴² Roosevelt and Churchill pointed out that the United States policy promoted unity

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 682.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 661.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 666.

by aiming at consensus on all issues. They said that "full and friendly discussions in the Council would serve to demonstrate the confidence which the Great Powers had in each other and in the justice of their policies."⁴³ They pointed out that, in any event, there was no method of preventing discussions of differences in the assembly.⁴⁴ The Soviets then agreed that the American proposals safeguarded unity.

Thus, it appears that the Soviet sensitivity and defensiveness on the question of unanimity on voting and discussion might well have been justified on pragmatic grounds. Dwight E. Lee emphasizes the importance of unanimity, at least in terms of consensus, and negates the significance of the purely legal aspects of the entire problem. He explains that

no system of voting can solve international problems. The slow process of persuasion, by argument and removal of suspicion, of compromise and ultimately of agreement is the only method by which sovereign and equal powers can compose their differences peacefully.⁴⁵

The Soviet position at the war conferences established a framework and pattern that would be followed at San Francisco and still influences Soviet actions and attitudes toward peacekeeping today. The most significant example of the fundamental Soviet attitude toward collective security and the later peacekeeping role is the voting question in the Security Council.

The Dilemma at San Francisco

With the defeat of Nazi Germany imminent, the desire for an international organization powerful enough to avert aggression seemed to be shared by all nations. At Yalta the Big Three had agreed to call a United Nations Conference on International Organization in April 1945. Deciding on San Francisco as the place, the governments of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and China sent invitations to forty-six governments which were at war with the Axis powers. Men were optimistic in April of 1945. As the conference opened, however, it became apparent that the delegates would have to overcome challenges not yet considered and the problems that they had once considered solved.

One of the problems was the Soviet Union. The USSR demanded no interference in its affairs and would not allow the development of any new international peacekeeping institutions that might hamper its

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 667.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Lee, p. 36.

activities. In this regard, the most important problems to emerge were a generally suspicious and critical attitude toward the USSR on the part of the other delegates, a re-emergence of the veto question with a new emphasis on the problem of freedom of discussion in the Council, and regionalism and the right of nations to withdraw from the international organization.

The governments attending the conference generally agreed on the purpose of the organization. At the opening session President Truman addressed the delegates and seemed to capture the new purpose that was emerging from the war years:

It is not the purpose of this conference to draft a treaty of peace in the old sense of the term. It is not our assignment to settle specific questions of territories, boundaries, citizenship, and reparations.

This conference will devote its energies and its labors exclusively to the single problem of setting up the essential organization to keep the peace.⁴⁶

One scholarly view suggests that there was general agreement on the Council's right to determine the need for sanctions, the obligation of members to share the burdens of enforcement, the obligation of members to furnish the organization with forces and arms and yet protect sovereign rights, the establishment of a military advisory body, and the provision for a future system to regulate armaments.⁴⁷ The Soviets appeared to agree with all of these points. Molotov stated at the opening plenary session:

. . . an international organization must be created having certain powers to safeguard the interests of the general peace. This organization must have the necessary means for military protection of the security of nations.⁴⁸

At the first plenary session, Molotov also hinted that the interests of the Soviet Union would be jealously guarded at the expense of any international organization:

It is impossible, however, to count indefinitely on the patience of nations . . . against the horrors and hardships of new piratic, imperialist wars.⁴⁹

The first major problem concerning the Soviets at San Francisco was the general hostility of most of the nations attending the conference

⁴⁶ UNCIO Documents, I, 114.

⁴⁷ Russell and Muther, p. 646.

⁴⁸ UNCIO Documents, I, 134.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 133.

toward the USSR, which tended to increase the defensiveness of the Russians toward any act that could be construed as an infringement on their rights. This hostility was coupled with an obvious American monopoly of power and friends. The attitude was the consequence of more than Soviet actions at the war conferences. It was the consequence of the role of the USSR in world politics at that time. These actions played an important role in establishing the framework within which the Soviets had to work.

The defeat of Germany was partly to blame for the hostile attitude, as it caused many people whose anti-Russian sentiments had been held in check during the war to feel that, since Russian military aid was no longer needed, it was time to begin setting limits to the expansion of the Soviet Union.⁵⁰ The USSR contributed directly to the problem by taking unilateral action in Europe, such as its recognition of the Renner government in Austria without previously consulting the U.S. and the UK, and the arrest of sixteen Poles, among whom were emissaries of the Polish government in exile sent to negotiate with Russia.⁵¹

Stalin's military actions during the Warsaw uprising in 1944 had a great effect on the attitude of most of the delegates. The uprising in that year had made it difficult to further planning for the new organization. Hull informed Gromyko on May 1, 1944, that the Polish incident had caused great injury to both governments, at least so far as public opinion was concerned. Gromyko replied that he spent too much of his time defending Russia against the attacks made on her for these small incidents which have nothing but a certain propaganda value for those unfriendly to the USSR.⁵² The Soviet Union's arrogant and brutal policy toward the Polish patriots alienated many of the delegates to the conference.

The last important factor in the hostility toward the Soviet Union was possible Soviet intervention in the war against Japan. The delegates from China were particularly worried that the Russians might make territorial claims at the expense of China.⁵³ Thus, the Russians were faced with an obstacle that was difficult to overcome. This general hostility only tended to give the Russians a greater sense of isolation and they, in turn, reacted from a sense of fear and frustration.

The most important problem concerning the Soviet attitude was the great power veto. The statement at Yalta assumed that they had arrived at a workable formula to establish Article 27 of the Charter.

⁵⁰ Vera M. Dean, "The San Francisco Conference," *Foreign Policy Reports*, XXI (July 15, 1945), 111.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Hull, II, 1443.

⁵³ Dean, p. 111.

At Yalta the Russians accepted the American formula, agreeing that the veto power would apply in all things except "procedural matters." They also agreed that in certain disputes before the Security Council for settlement, a member of the Council who was a party to the dispute should abstain from voting (peaceful settlement). At San Francisco the USSR re-opened the voting issue by interpreting the Yalta veto as applying even to the discussion of a dispute. The United States and Britain would not interpret the formula in this way. Senator Vandenburg declared, "It means in plain language that the Russians can raise Hell all over the world, through satellites and fifth columns, and stop the new League from even enquiring into it."⁵⁴ Furthermore, the fear raised at Yalta that most of the South American countries and other small nations would refuse to take part in the new organization was again raised by the Soviet demand.⁵⁵

More specifically, the Soviet Union objected to a proposal in the joint statement of interpretation that concerned freedom of discussion in the Council. The Soviet Union, a sponsor of the statement along with the UK, the U.S. and China, disagreed with the other three powers on the third proposal which read:

Since the Council has the right by a procedural vote to decide its own rules of procedure, it follows that no individual member of the council can alone prevent a consideration and discussion by the council of a dispute or situation brought to its attention. Nor can parties to such dispute be prevented by these means from being heard by the council.⁵⁶

The Soviet Union argued that discussion which was not followed by action would only discredit the organization. On the other hand, they argued, the discussion of a dispute might have major political consequences. Thus, the discussion of a dispute is of great political importance and cannot be considered a procedural matter.⁵⁷ The other four major powers flatly rejected the Soviet position.

The British representative wondered how the Council could decide whether to deal with a dispute referred to it if could not even discuss the matter. The United States clearly stated that it would never accept a charter that vetoed discussion. Thus, the Soviet delegate agreed to contact Moscow again and this time a slightly modified proposal, but one which guaranteed discussion, was accepted.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Arthur H. Vandenburg, Jr. ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenburg* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1952), p. 196.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Russell and Muther, p. 727.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 731.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 732.

The crisis over regionalism and the issue of the withdrawal of a nation from the organization provide the last two most relevant examples of the attitude that serves as the foundation of the Soviet view toward security. Pertaining to regionalism, the Soviet Union was primarily interested in being allowed to establish its own system of bilateral defense treaties, particularly in order to keep Germany disarmed.⁵⁹ The Soviets had already negotiated a pact of this type with France. There was general agreement among the great powers that these bilateral treaties were perfectly legitimate. Thus, the Soviets turned to the next phase of the issue and argued, principally against the United States, that regional security pacts would undermine the effectiveness of the United Nations. The Soviets wanted no alliances that might hamper their activities or pose a threat to defense. On the other hand, the United States and the Latin American countries wished to safeguard the Western Hemisphere from outside interference through their own regional agreements. Senator Vandenburg stated:

The grave problem is to find a formula which will reasonably protect legitimate regional arrangements without destroying the over-all responsibility of united action, through the Peace League and without inviting the formation of a lot of dangerous new "regional spheres of influence" etc.⁶⁰

The United States was also aware of the past role of alliances and "spheres of influence" in damaging national interest and obstructing peace.

Articles 51 and 53 finally provided the solution to harmonizing regionalism with the concept of collective security. Article 51 of the Charter recognizes the right of collective self-defense, giving regional agencies the right to use force if necessary. According to Article 53, however, these organizations cannot initiate the use of force without authorization from the Security Council.

Concerning the question of withdrawal from the organization, the Russians argued that it was an expression of state sovereignty. They were sensitive to the point where, at the first plenary session of June 25, Gromyko objected to a chapter in one of the principal documents which read:

If, however, a member because of exceptional circumstances feels constrained to withdraw, and leave the burden of maintaining international peace and security on the other members, it is not the purpose of this organization to compel that member to continue its cooperation in the organization.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Vandenburg, p. 187.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ UNCIO Documents, I, 619.

Gromyko objected to the wording, "and leave the burden of maintaining international peace and security on the other members," on the grounds that it is wrong to condemn beforehand the reasons for which a state might find it necessary to exercise its sovereign right of withdrawal from the organization.⁶²

This analysis of examples indicates that Stalin considered the formation of a United Nations organization a matter of secondary importance to the Soviet Union. Stalin was glad to accept the recognition of the USSR as one of the Big Three, but he was far more anxious to establish Soviet security on the basis of the bilateral treaties allowed in Articles 51, 52, and 53. The preference was for direct commitments. However, throughout the negotiations concerning the Charter, Stalin remained wary enough to give prime consideration to Soviet security interests. He was not afraid to bluntly challenge the other great powers and the smaller nations on the issues of the veto, unanimity, free discussion, and the problems of regionalism. He was aware that the interests of the Soviet Union could not be harmed in the UN in a world of power politics if he grasped the veto, and he realized that the United Nations could be used as a secondary instrument to increase Soviet prestige through propaganda even though it was dominated by American power. The only innovation that might possibly pose a threat to Soviet sovereignty was the new military staff committee appointed to advise on the establishment of an international military force.

The United States and The Soviet Union in The Military Staff Committee

The story of the Military Staff Committee presents one of the better examples of the debate between the Soviets and the Americans over an international peacekeeping force. The Soviet Union wanted a security force, but often on different terms than the West. Throughout the discussions of the MSC, the Soviet Union adhered closely to the Charter, but relative to the other major powers it was extremely sensitive to any encroachment on its national rights. According to the Charter, the member nations were to agree in advance to make available to the Security Council specific contingents of "armed forces, specific facilities, and other forms of assistance." On February 16, 1946, the Security Council adopted a resolution requesting the Military Staff Committee, consisting of the chiefs of staff of the five permanent members, to make a thorough study of Article 43 and advise the Council concerning it. In August 1948, the discussions of the General ended in complete failure, a victim of the rising tensions of the cold war.

⁶² *Ibid.*

As explained in the section concerning the San Francisco conference, the framers of the Charter attempted to establish a system of security that would provide for cooperative action under some form of international direction and would leave national direction and command intact. The idea of an autonomous international force, not controlled by veto, was rejected by all the major powers as too great an infringement on national rights.

The first area of dispute illustrating the nature of the debate concerned the strength and nature of the armed forces. The Soviets were not interested in forces that would be strong enough to represent a real threat to national forces. The USSR argued that there was no need for a large military branch as the only real potential aggressor had been crushed and was under allied control.⁶³ The Soviets claimed that they had in mind something in the nature of 125,000 men, 600 bombers, 300 fighters, five to six cruisers and 24 destroyers.⁶⁴

There seems to have been a great deal of dispute among the five major powers about the size of the forces. The United States, for one, was at the opposite extreme of the Soviet Union. The United States argued that the problem of the United Nations was to enforce peace in all parts of the world, for which the UN needed a large mobile force "able to strike quickly at long range and to bring to bear, upon any given point in the world . . . the maximum armed force in the minimum amount of time."⁶⁵ The Americans had in mind something like 300,000 men, 1250 bombers, 2250 fighters, three battleships, six carriers, 15 cruisers, 84 destroyers and 90 submarines.⁶⁶

Closely connected to the question of size was the problem of the principles governing the contributions of armed forces to be made by the states to the Security Council. Again the principal debate was between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviets suggested that the principle of equality should govern contributions. Each of the Big Five would contribute an equal portion of overall strength, and also an equal number of land, sea, and air contingents.⁶⁷ The Soviets refused to accept the Western proposals on Article 28 of the MSC report on the grounds that they did not take into account the principle of equality in the contribution of armed forces.⁶⁸

The Soviet sensitivity to sovereignty was explicitly stated by Soviet delegate Gromyko in his response to the major alternative suggestion to

⁶³ United Nations, Security Council, *Official Records*, 139th Meeting (June 6, 1947), p. 968. Hereafter cited as SCOR.

⁶⁴ William R. Frye, *U.N. Peacekeeping Force* (New York: Oceana Publishing Co., 1957), p. 54.

⁶⁵ SCOR, 138th meeting (June 4, 1947), p. 956.

⁶⁶ Frye, p. 54.

⁶⁷ SCOR, 139th meeting, p. 966.

⁶⁸ *The Report of the Military Staff Committee to the Security Council* (April 30, 1947), SCOR, 2nd year, special supplement No. 1, p. 11. Hereafter cited as MSC Report.

the Soviet plan. The United States suggested that the principle of "comparable contributions" should govern the system. In accordance with this principle, each of the five great powers would contribute the type and amount of armed force that it was best able to contribute.⁶⁹ Gromyko replied before the Security Council:

The principle of comparable contributions would mean the creation of a situation in which certain major powers would enjoy an obvious power advantage over others. Therefore, one might be confronted with concrete cases in which the U.N. forces would be used in the interests of individual powerful states and used to the detriment of the legitimate rights of other nations.⁷⁰

The Soviet Union was not alone in opposition to large armed forces. France, China, and the United Kingdom also favored a small force, but their opposition may well have been based on other factors as important to them as protecting sovereign rights. One interpretation holds that their stand is probably based on their inability to make large contributions.⁷¹

In view of the fact that France and China would be limited in their ability to contribute, the Soviets had adopted a formula that could serve as a convenient means for limiting the size of the forces. But whether or not this was their primary reason for adopting the formula is a question on which scholars disagree. It is clear that the Soviets presented a reasonable case, adhered to the letter of the Charter, and were primarily concerned with protecting their freedom of action. Thus, using their formula to limit the size of the forces may well have been a consideration.

It should be emphasized that the Soviets no doubt regarded the United States proposal with deep suspicion. As is pointed out in the Gromyko statement above, the Soviets were afraid the U.S. would use a large force against the USSR. The Soviets were suspicious that the United States had deliberately bypassed the basic principle of sovereignty explicit in the Charter that clearly implies that there should be no opportunity for the U.N. to be used against one of the major powers.⁷²

The discussion about the establishment of international military bases also helps illustrate Soviet sensitivity. The United States, the United Kingdom, and China proposed to implement Article 43 of the

⁶⁹ SCOR, 138th meeting (June 4, 1947), p. 956.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 139th meeting, p. 968.

⁷¹ Leland Goodrich and Ann Simons, *The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1955), p. 400.

⁷² Inis L. Claude, *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 181.

Charter by making military bases available to the Security Council wherever they might be required.⁷³ In contrast, the Soviet delegate explained that Article 43 of the Charter obliged members to make available to the Security Council the armed forces and facilities necessary, but the article does not contain provisions obliging members to make bases available. The USSR therefore rejected the Western proposal partly on the basis that it does not adhere to the general principles of the Charter.⁷⁴

The focus of Soviet concern for the general principles of the Charter was again explicitly grounded on the principles of sovereignty. Before the Security Council, Gromyko stated that "the provision of bases inevitably affects the sovereignty of states." He explained:

The acceptance of the proposal on bases would be utilized by some states as a means of exerting political pressure on other nations which provided such bases. There can be no doubt about this, especially if we take into account well-known facts from the field of international relations. The demand for bases cannot be evaluated other than as an attempt to by-pass the United Nations' Charter on this question in the interests of the policy of certain powerful nations⁷⁵

Rights of passage illustrated the fourth major disagreement reflecting Soviet concern for protection of national rights. The Soviets claimed that the Western proposal for a general guarantee of rights of passage for United Nations troops was not valid for the same reason that the proposal regarding bases was not valid. The Soviets argued that if there was to be any guarantee of rights of passage it could only come as part of a specific agreement regarding a particular situation.⁷⁶ China, the United Kingdom, and the United States agreed that a general guarantee for rights of passage should be written in. France also agreed with minor qualifications.⁷⁷

The last area of major dispute illustrating the Soviet-American split concerns the location and withdrawal of troops that might be employed by the Security Council. In regard to the location of armed forces, the USSR was on the defensive when the U.S., the UK, and China suggested that the U.N. forces could be stationed in territories or waters "to which they have legal right of access."⁷⁸ The Soviets demanded that the armed forces made available to the Security Council

⁷³ *MSC Report*, p. 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ *SCOR*, 139th meeting, p. 970.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 971.

⁷⁷ *MSC Report*, p. 5.

⁷⁸ *SCOR*, 139th meeting, p. 973.

should be garrisoned only within the borders of the contributing nation's own territory.⁷⁹

Concerning the withdrawal of troops employed by the Security Council, the Soviets also disagreed fundamentally with the West. The Soviets proposed a definite time limit of thirty to ninety days for the withdrawal of forces after the completion of a task, while the Western powers proposed that after the armed forces have fulfilled their tasks they should be withdrawn "as soon as possible."⁸⁰ The USSR regarded this as not definite enough and a proposal that could do damage to national interests. Gromyko stated that

the general formula providing for the withdrawal of armed forces 'as soon as possible' is absolutely insufficient. It does not oblige the armed forces to leave the territories of other states when their presence is no longer necessary. . . . This formula, if accepted, would be used as a pretext for the continuous presence of foreign troops in territories of other states⁸¹

All the permanent members of the Council except the Soviet Union believed that the troops should not be definitely limited.⁸²

In addition to the above disputes, there were minor disputes regarding the supply of armed forces and an international air force. The Soviets believed that international troops should be supplied by the countries of their origin so as not to be taken advantage of by a nation that might dominate the Security Council or use another's forces for its own interests.⁸³ The Soviets took the position that requirements for air force contingents should be determined in accordance with provisions of Article 43. The West claimed that the strength, composition, and readiness of national air force contingents should be determined by the obligations arising from Article 45, which would justify a more powerful force than the Soviets considered necessary.⁸⁴

The failure of the MSC must be blamed on disagreement over several principal issues. The Soviets were opposed several times to the West on major issues, although there was frequent agreement. The most significant factor for this study is that they often justified their positions with an extreme concern for national rights. As to the failure of the project, Gromyko struck at the heart of the problem when he explained that the "whole question of armed forces being made

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 972.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 975.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *MSC Report*, p. 4.

⁸³ *SCOR*, 139th meeting, p. 977.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 979.

available to the Security Council by the UN under special agreements is not only, and not so much a technical question as a political one."⁸⁵

The Soviet-American Debate in Perspective

The idea of an international security force did not die with the failure of the Military Staff Committee. The concept remained, occasionally brought forward for intense consideration, and finally became the backbone of UN peacekeeping as it operated in Egypt and in the Congo. The position adopted by the Soviet Union toward recent peacekeeping operations and machinery is consistent with its tendency in the Stalin years to safeguard its own freedom of action and limit UN authority. But the foundation was clearly established in the Stalin era.

Following the establishment of the United Nations and during the discussions concerning the MSC, the Soviet Union received its first taste of the role that the Security Council might possibly play in interfering with its activities.

The Iranian question that was brought before the first session of the Security Council no doubt convinced the Soviets that they must continue to oppose any expansion of the powers of the Council. The issue centered around the Soviet refusal to withdraw its troops from Iranian territory following the war. In December 1945 Soviet agents had crossed the border and with the support of the Red Army overthrew the provincial government at Iabriz and began to make changes in the social and economic structure. At the first meeting of the Security Council, the Iranian delegates charged the Soviets with aggressive interference. Once again emphasizing sovereign rights, the Soviet representative, Vyshinsky, declared that the question could and should be settled through bi-lateral discussion.⁸⁶ The question was dealt with by the Soviets as a procedural problem and was never acted upon. Eventually, the troops were withdrawn.

Later, when the Ukrainian SSR brought the Indonesian case before the Council, lodging a complaint about the British and asking for a restoration of peace under the UN, the Soviets supported their republic in the name of national sovereignty.⁸⁷ In the same way, the Soviet Union supported Egypt and the Sudan against Britain, and Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Morocco against France.⁸⁸

One of the better examples in the late Stalin era of intense consideration of an international force was the suggested establishment of a UN Guard Force. In his introduction to the annual report for 1947-

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 146th meeting, p. 1099.

⁸⁶ *SCOR*, 2nd meeting (January 25, 1946), p. 42.

⁸⁷ Dallin, p. 29.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

48, Trygve Lie suggested a plan for the formation of the Guard Force. He explained that this force would not be used as a substitute for the forces contemplated in Articles 42 and 43 or as a striking force. According to the Secretary-General, it could be used for guard duty with UN missions in the conduct of plebiscites, as a constabulary for the establishment of international regimes, or as a tool to prevent the worsening of a situation threatening the peace. It would not be a large force, but rather in the neighborhood of 1000 to 5000 men.⁸⁹

The Soviet reaction to the proposal was sharp. Representative Malik led the Soviet attack against the suggestion in the General Assembly's *ad hoc* Political Committee. His first point was directed to the legality of the proposed force. He declared that the so-called guard was indeed an armed force equipped with automatic weapons and armored vehicles and as such it was the kind of force that could be created only by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter which made it subject to the Principle of unanimity. Malik claimed that the Charter contains no provisions entitling the Secretary-General to create or direct armed forces of any kind and that the political significance of the proposal was to bypass the Security Council and to replace it, "through various illegally constituted bodies," as the main organ of the UN responsible for peace and security.⁹⁰

Secondly, Representative Malik charged that the proposed guard was indeed a striking force. He declared that the proposal could be regarded as nothing less than a further step in the attempt of the governing circles of the UK and the U.S. for the purpose of violating the Charter and making use of the UN in their own interests.⁹¹ The reference to infringement on sovereignty by the action of the force was explicit. Malik stated:

Such a proposal offered wide possibilities of illegal application; in the last analysis it was intended to bypass the Security Council and to allow the U.S. and the U.K. to continue without restraint their political and military interference in the domestic affairs of other states.⁹²

He complained that the Palestine force of 1948 upon which this new concept was apparently based had consisted of 70% to 90% U.S. personnel.⁹³

⁸⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, "Introduction to the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization 1947-48," *Official Records: Annexes to Summary Records of Meetings*, 3rd session, pp. 6-8.

⁹⁰ United Nations, General Assembly, *Official Records: Summary Records of Ad hoc Political Committee*, 3rd session (May 10, 1949), p. 30.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

In his book, *In the Cause of Peace*, Trygve Lie explains that others also had objections to the plan but they were not as vociferous as the USSR. He stated “. . . others, too, had hesitations and doubts partly because of inertia – an internationally recruited police force was too radical an idea for many governments.”⁹⁴ But this was not the end of the line for the idea. It eventually emerged in the form of a greatly modified United Nations Field Service charged with rendering auxiliary service to UN missions in the field. It was unarmed, but especially trained in operation and maintenance of communications and transportation equipment.⁹⁵

The Korean War and the “Uniting for Peace Resolution” provide the last examples of the Soviet view of an international force during the Stalin era. When North Korean armies drove a spearhead across the 38th parallel in June of 1950, the necessity of a UN force became apparent. The Soviet attitude was also clear, but the delegate forfeited his right to veto action by boycotting the meeting. Later the “Uniting for Peace Resolution” recommended that member states which the collective measures committee finds appropriate should maintain elements within their national armed forces for prompt availability as United Nations’ units. The resolution also requested

the Secretary-General to appoint, with the approval of the committee, . . . a panel of military experts who could be made available on request to states wishing to obtain technical advice regarding the organization, training and equipment for prompt service as United Nations units. . . .⁹⁶

The Soviet reaction was sharp but legally within the framework of the Security Council veto. Vyshinsky declared:

This provision is basically and fundamentally incompatible with the Charter. It shortcircuits the Military Staff Committee and the Security Council . . . It is even more bizarre than that: it speaks of military experts and advisors who it suggests . . . will be under the orders of the Secretary-General. Apparently, the military experts will be at the beck and call of the Secretary-General. He is to be commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the General Assembly . . . riding on a white horse. . . .⁹⁷

But the assembly was not convinced that the idea was totally wrong, and the plan was included with the emergency power that was shifted from the Security Council to the assembly.

⁹⁴ Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1954), p. 193.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Considering Stalin's extreme "two camp" view and his conception of capitalist encirclement, one might have expected fundamental changes in the Soviet attitude toward the UN Security Council. One might have expected that the USSR would make positive contributions to the contemporary idea of UN peacekeeping which emerged with the Suez crisis and the Congo operation. According to Lincoln P. Bloomfield, the Suez and Congo crises present us with examples of the new conception of peacekeeping which involves "militant supervision of ceasefires and truces, for keeping the armed parties apart (but with far less actual military power than would be needed if they resumed hostilities)," and the Congo brand of "internal policing and order keeping."⁹⁸ Bloomfield also suggests three other criteria for definition: guard duty, observation and patrol, and in theory an international combat force.⁹⁹

In coping with these specific decisions to mount UN peacekeeping operations, the Soviet Union has almost always tied its position to the insistence on using the Security Council where the veto applies. On Egypt the Soviet Union abstained in the vote establishing the UN Emergency Force on the grounds that only the Security Council could approve the creation of any UN armed forces. The Soviet Union also abstained on the resolution setting up the UN observation group in Lebanon in 1958 on the same grounds.¹⁰⁰

In June of 1960 when the Congo was thrown into chaos, the Soviets seemed to lay aside their traditional arguments and voted for the establishment of an international force. This was a short-term stand. Alexander Dallin claims that it was brought on as an extension of the policy to befriend the African states, for the Congo situation appeared to be a cause in which the Communists could protect the emerging nations from the West. Then the USSR began to revert to its old position. It began to support the Lumumba faction outside of the framework of the UN. When the Secretary-General pointed out that the Soviets along with the other great powers had voted not to intervene with troops or material, directly or indirectly, the Soviet Union charged the UN with

an attempt at taking control over the relations between the Congo Republic and other states, especially the Soviet Union (Whereas) not a single U.N. administrative official has the right to intervene in the relations between sovereign states if these states do not request it.¹⁰¹

After the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union also tied the all-important disarmament issue to the problems of an international force

⁹⁸ Lincoln P. Bloomfield, *International Military Forces* (MIT Arms Control Project) (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964), p. 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁰¹ Dallin, p. 144.

and sovereignty. In February of 1960 Secretary of State Christian Herter established the official Western policy on disarmament by calling for "general and complete disarmament." Herter first called for stabilization of the military environment. He suggested that this called for measures to control the danger of surprise attack, and the continuous spread of nuclear weapons.¹⁰² Then he suggested that United States objectives should in part be the following:

First, to create universally accepted rules of law which, if followed, would prevent all nations from attacking other nations. Such rules of law should be backed by a world court and by effective means of enforcement — that is, by an international armed force.

Secondly, to reduce national armed forces, under safeguarded and verified arrangements, to the point where no single nation or group of nations could effectively oppose this enforcement of international law by international machinery.¹⁰³

The Soviet response was to claim that disarmament and international forces are not necessarily compatible because disarmament removed the need for such peacekeeping activities. Furthermore, to the Soviets, the idea that an international force should be formed before disarmament only doubled the dangers involved. In an article in *International Affairs*, Y. Koravin stated:

The principle of national self-determination and its legal embodiment, state sovereignty, are among the main and generally recognized principles of contemporary international law.¹⁰⁴

Koravin accuses the West of using sovereignty as justification for interference in China, Korea, Lebanon, Laos and Central America, and then declared:

We should add that the formation of an international army before general and complete disarmament is effected would lead in practice either to the rise of unprecedented 'supermilitarism,' if the international armed forces were stronger than the armies of the Soviet Union and the United States, or the perpetuation of extreme inequality in international relations if the international force were employed only against small and weak countries. The experience offered by the use of the U.N. force in the Congo makes us approach this issue with extreme caution.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² U.S., Department of State *Bulletin*, "Address to the National Press Club at Washington, D.C." (February 18, 1960), p. 356.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Y. Koravin, "Disarmament and Sovereignty," *International Affairs (U.S.S.R.)* (February 1961), p. 57.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

The Soviets are convinced that the Western powers would use an international force to interfere not only with the affairs of the USSR but with the movement toward self-determination. In *International Affairs*, S. Vladimirov states that an international force would be used to fight the national liberation movement in the dependencies, crush any action by democratic forces within capitalist countries, bully small countries, and exert military and political pressure on the disarmed Socialist countries.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the legacy of Stalin in regard to international peacekeeping machinery still plays a great role in the Soviet attitude.

Conclusion

The problem of the Soviet-American debate over peacekeeping represents the magnified problem of any sovereign nation within an international organization that tends to limit its activities.

In the Soviet case the problem has always been magnified because the USSR has been faced with overwhelming Western power, coupled to the fact that the Soviets conceive of themselves as an elite group destined to establish a new world order. During the Stalin years the Soviet Union was forced into cooperation with the West. It was forced to work within the framework of what it considered to be the "old diplomacy."

Despite its elitist philosophy, the Soviet Union had few good reasons for leaving the organization. First, after a period of deep isolation, the Soviet Union was well aware that the national interest required political, economic, and cultural contacts with other nations. The UN could not only serve these purposes, but it could serve the Soviets well as a propaganda forum. Second, the security system that was established could provide protection against Germany, at least as the Soviets perceived it.

At the same time, the Soviets believed that there were sufficient safeguards against Western encroachments. Although the U.S. differed substantially with the USSR over the nature of a peacekeeping force, it clearly supported the concept of unanimity. The USSR realized that the concept of unanimity provided the key to protection against the expansion of undesired peacekeeping powers and the development of a powerful international force. Consequently, the use of the veto to defend against a powerful international force and the resulting deterioration of the power of the Security Council has been the most significant aspect of the Stalinist legacy regarding peacekeeping.

The United States and the Soviet Union clashed over the peacekeeping issue many times following the origins of the conflict. The

¹⁰⁶ S. Vladimirov, "Disarmament and the Plans for Establishing an International Police Force," *International Affairs (U.S.S.R.)* (April 1960), pp. 47-48.

USSR abstained in the vote establishing the UN Emergency Force in Egypt in November 1956. The USSR also abstained on the resolution establishing a UN observer group in Lebanon in 1958. In 1963 the Soviets refused to recognize the right of a small UN observer group to go to Yemen. The Congo operation was also strongly condemned.

The Middle East conflict of 1973 underlines the implications of the original debate for contemporary Soviet-American relations. When Egypt suggested that the United States and the Soviet Union send large contingents to the Middle East in October of 1973 for the purpose of manning a substantial UN peacekeeping force, the superpowers quickly backed away from the proposals. It was clear to observers that each side perceived the direct introduction of armed forces by the other side as a threat to the tenuously balanced spheres of influence that have evolved in the Middle East. Thus, the peacekeeping problem with all of its related sovereign sensitivities has re-emerged as an important question. These attitudes, seen against the background of the war conferences, San Francisco, and discussions regarding the MSC, give ample evidence that the foundation of the present conflict emerged with the UN concept itself. The same problems remain because the Soviet Union and the United States continue to view the UN as another arena in the struggle among national sovereignties.

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