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The Distinction of Peace

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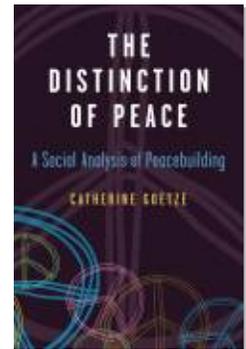
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The Peacebuilding Field as Default Space



In June 1960, Patrice Lumumba, the newly elected prime minister of the Congo, wrote to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, requesting military aid to reestablish law and order in the country, which had just become independent. The Congo was a mess. Belgium had quickly and rather unexpectedly granted independence following student riots in 1959. The independence ceremony on June 1, 1960, saw an abrasive verbal exchange between Lumumba and King Baudouin of Belgium. Baudouin's paternalistic speech praised his grandfather King Leopold II, whose reign had left half of the Congo's population dead.¹ Lumumba responded harshly, condemning the blood, sweat, and tears of colonialism.²

The heated argument reflected the high tensions running through the country. Almost everywhere, white elites hung on to positions and power after June 1960. They did so particularly in the army. Consequently, black soldiers mutinied against their white officers in the first week of July 1960. Within hours, the country descended into chaos, and highly exaggerated rumors of violence and rape led white communities to leave the country in panic.

Belgian paratroopers were quickly shipped in and (re)occupied the Congo. In the course of these tumultuous events, the southern province of Katanga, the industrial and economic powerhouse of the country, seceded. The secession was officially declared by the Congolese politi-

cian Moïse Tshombé, but among the Congolese little doubt existed that it had been planned, supported, and financed by the long arms of white elites in Katanga, and most particularly by the powerful Belgian mining company Union Minière du Haut Katanga.³

By appealing to the UN, Lumumba hoped to receive decisive support to end the Katangan secession, to rid the country of Belgian troops, and to integrate the Congo into a larger, pan-African unit. By responding positively to his appeal, Hammarskjöld hoped to keep the Congo out of Cold War rivalries and to confirm the UN's role as global arbitrator. The two men's goals proved incompatible. The Congo mission would turn into a disaster. Both Hammarskjöld and Lumumba would lose their lives in the Congo crisis.⁴ The country descended into years of civil war that ended with Mobutu Sese Seko's thirty-year dictatorship.

The Congo conflict threw the UN into a deep financial and legitimacy crisis; Security Council members subsequently excluded the Secretary-General from all major decisions on peace and war in the world. Yet the Congo mission was foundational for the peacebuilding field. The mission's aims and practices went far beyond the separation of warring parties that had been the goal of former peacekeeping missions in Lebanon and in the Sinai. The objective in the Congo was to reestablish public order and to establish a substitute for, at least for some time, the country's failing administration and public services. The mission included large civilian and humanitarian platforms, and interfered deeply in the politics of the country. It anticipated the state failure discourse that has justified most interventions since the 1990s (and which sometimes simply replaces the notion of "peacebuilding" with the notion of "statebuilding").⁵ It also created the discourse of the UN's neutrality in peacekeeping and of the international civil servant.

Because of its foundational character, this chapter will begin with a deeper analysis of the Congo mission and subsequent chapters will again and again come back to 1960, to Hammarskjöld and his "Congo Club" (as his closest advisers were known), and to what the UN (and others) did in the Congo from 1960 to 1964.

This chapter will explore how peacebuilding developed as a *field by default*. It will argue that those activities that are presently counted into the field (e.g., humanitarian assistance, refugee assistance, demobilization and security sector reform, administration and governance, human rights and rule of law) have been initiated and undertaken by the UN and other international organizations because effective *peacemaking* was

and is not in their capacity. The activities involved in peacebuilding were and still are initiated precisely because international actors cannot intervene quickly, as with a surgical strike, to stop violence and reestablish a status quo of self-government.

Such a narrative of peacebuilding's emergence is at odds with the Whig history advocated by the agencies themselves. According to the actors themselves peacebuilding is constantly if uneasily progressing through a series of lessons learned.⁶ Indeed, peacebuilding is progressing if measured in its steady increase in numbers of missions, troops on the ground, and declarations of success. Peacebuilding has become a very popular, almost banal policy instrument in the past twenty years.⁷ However, although in some cases UN intervention did end violence (e.g., in Timor-Leste),⁸ or at least replace outright war with criminal violence and occasional communal strife, most missions have failed to create conditions for durable peace and development. Some missions even seem to have produced more violence than they have stopped.⁹ Even more important, politics and most notably democratic politics have remained suspended, and the institutions the peace missions build are inappropriate, inadequate, inoperational, and productive of seemingly endless repetitions of mission cycles. Despite the growing emphasis on local ownership, a close look at interventions shows that states remain underdeveloped or suspended in a large web of international agencies, donors, third-party governments, and other social forces.¹⁰ Even when interventions stop direct bloodshed, they fail to eliminate the cleavages and fault lines that conflicts clearly mark out.¹¹ Worse still, peace missions often provide resources, discursive frames, and opportunities to continue these conflicts either without violence, or with violence just under the threshold of open war.¹²

If the findings of local case studies on the effects of peacebuilding missions on the ground are taken into account, and set in the context of the larger quandaries of the "high politics" of peace in the UN Security Council and among the states involved in contemporary wars, the story of constant progress of peace is hardly tenable. Every single crisis that has been negotiated in the UN Security Council or as a matter of international peace efforts in other forums (e.g., the Contact Group for the Balkans or the Munich Negotiations for Syria) illustrates the extreme complexity of peacebuilding. The story told in this chapter about peacebuilding emphasizes its haphazard character. Activities that are undertaken in the field, policies that frame and guide peacebuilding and the

actors' initiatives, do not follow consequentially out of premeditated or functionally rational plans but have to be seen as the result of historical conjunctures.

Actors in the world political field create the peacebuilding field by interacting with one another in a constant struggle over relative power positions. The resulting politics are shaped by this jockeying over resources, alliances, prestige, and recognition in handling a specific type of political problem. Such politics are, therefore, not inherently rational or, in any predefined way, the best politics for a given situation. They are the politics that are *possible* with a given constellation of actors and under the circumstances of their interaction. Whatever coherence and rationales exist in these actions, these do not result from policy planning but from the inherent dynamics of peacebuilding as a socio-professional and, by extension, sociopolitical field. Discourses of peace, plans and projects of peacebuilding activities, or specific policies and political initiative all exist as *responses* to a given set of actions, discourses, initiatives, and policies of other actors in the field. The peacebuilding field exists in its current form exactly because the rational and planned construction of peace by an international community is a chimera; yet people, organizations, and social forces *do* certain things they call peacebuilding, and *this* doing, and being, shapes the field.

In order to capture the conjunctural construction of the peacebuilding field, the chapter will discuss three moments: the foundation of the field with the Congo mission of 1960, the dialectic movement of expansion and retraction of the field in the 1990s through the failed mission in former Yugoslavia, and the field's consolidation through its codification in the fifteen years from the Agenda for Peace to the responsibility to protect doctrines. These three moments are not arbitrarily chosen, but they could have been replaced with other events. Yet in this narrative these three moments are useful to discuss the social construction of peacebuilding as a socio-professional and sociopolitical field.

The Congo: The Foundation of the Peacebuilding Field

The matter at stake in the Congo crisis was nothing less than the definition of—and the authority to establish—peace. In this foundational situation, all actors positioned themselves in a power struggle to define and impose their concept of peace. At the core of this was the question of who the peacemaker should be, and more precisely whether the

UN under the leadership of its Secretary-General should be the central authority to define and make peace. Although the actors' positions have changed over time, peacebuilding remains a field of competitive claims precisely over this authority to define and defend peace, and because of the material and ideational resources that go hand in hand with such an authority.

Actors base their claims on various resources. During the Congo mission, the United Nations, as represented by Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, drew mainly on the legal capital of the UN Charter, and on the symbolic capital procured by past peacekeeping missions as well as Hammarskjöld's personal stature. Indeed, the timing of the Congo crisis and mission was propitious for UN action in several respects. In the wake of the Korea disaster, the organization's reputation for acting to promote world peace had been credibly reestablished by its inventive solution to the Suez crisis. The invasion of Sinai that Israel, France, and Great Britain had staged against Egypt in order to regain control of the Suez Canal and remove Gamal Abdel Nasser from power provided an excellent opportunity for the entrepreneurial Hammarskjöld, then new to his job, to set up the UN as a neutral mediator and buffer between the Cold War opponents; as a broker in territorial and other conflicts between states; and as the fair defender of weak newcomers (such as Egypt) to the international system.

The concept of peacekeeping was simple and straightforward: establish a military buffer zone between warring parties, and keep them apart until a political solution could be found. States contributing troops to the mission were not to be involved in the conflict, and the troops were to be under the command of the UN. A geographical space was delimited in which fighting stopped, and no actor interfered in any way in any other actor's sovereignty. The warring states remained fully responsible and in charge of their armies and their domestic politics. Peacekeeping was an exercise in *inter*-national politics, law, and military diplomacy. State borders remained political boundaries.

The problem with peacekeeping in this view was that the UN's material capital—financial and military—remained poor, and intentionally so. The UN relies largely on the willingness of state actors, in this case its member states, to lend finances and military means. The states' willingness to give the UN a helping hand, however, is determined by the stakes of the wider world-political field and, hence, is contingent on strategies and tactics of bargaining in other fields such as the world economy, trade, development, and security.

During the Congo crisis, several struggles defined the context of the mission: first, the rivalry between the two nuclear superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union; second, the struggle between the government of the Congo and Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, who defended a paternalistic view of trusteeship; and, third, the struggle between colonial powers and newly independent states over decolonization. In this three-faceted struggle all actors sought to position themselves at a clearly definable distance to each other. Tensions between the actors restricted their respective scope of action.

This was most particularly true for the United Nations. The UN was born out of the temporary alliance of the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, during World War II. Its life, however, was mostly determined by their rivalry.¹³ From World War II through the Cold War, the UN understood peace as the avoidance of armed conflict between states, and given the threat of nuclear attack, mainly as avoidance of a superpower clash. It is doubtful that Hammarskjöld would have engaged the UN in a large-scale mission like the Congo if it had not been for this interpretation of the UN's role in preserving world peace. The foremost goal of the UN mission, therefore, was to keep the Cold War rivalry out of Africa.

Yet, in practice, the Congo mission first and foremost kept out the Soviet Union but not the United States. Only after the ouster of the Soviet Union had been clearly achieved (at the price of a military coup and the life of Patrice Lumumba) did the mission focus on the Katangan secession. From the Congolese point of view, however, the secession had been at the core of the conflict: Lumumba's interpretation of peace had been to rid the country of Belgian troops and foreign mercenaries who were protecting European economic interests concentrated in Katanga. For Lumumba, the security problem in the Congo was not indigenous, but the result of external intrusion dating back to colonial times. He particularly argued that Belgium did not intervene to restore order (the position of Hammarskjöld and his advisers, the Congo Club) but to recolonize the country through the puppet regime in Katanga.

Lumumba's and Hammarskjöld's views clashed spectacularly in their letter exchange of August 1960.¹⁴ In his letters, Lumumba argued that all UN troops should be placed under the command of the Congolese government. His understanding of exclusive sovereignty included a strong view, among others, on the central government's right to use force and the rejection of any other commander of force. It was, put simply, a traditional, conservative, nineteenth-century understanding of

territorial sovereignty and monopoly of violence, clad in the language of anticolonial nationalism and fervent advocacy of self-determination. Yet Hammarskjöld and the Congo Club interpreted it as defiance of the UN's supreme authority to define peace.

For these UN senior officials, Lumumba's nationalism was a challenge because it was based on an exclusive concept of sovereignty that defied the notion of the UN as an organization superior to state authority, just as it defied the paternalistic intrusion of Belgium. The delicate, because it was paradoxical, point Hammarskjöld was forced to make in response was that the Congo was indeed sovereign, and that no external powers should intervene in the Congo . . . except for the UN. Even though state sovereignty was the basis of international law, the UN, as the guardian of international law, was free to interpret the meaning of sovereignty.

Already Hammarskjöld was laboring hard, as would international lawyers forty years later, on scholastic hairsplitting arguments about what type of sovereignty should be respected and what type should not. His clutching at straws was that the UN had no interests of its own in intervention; the UN was intervening on the authority of a Security Council resolution. Hammarskjöld and his supporters defined their mission as preserving world peace, and this moral objective had the prerogative over political goals as formulated by sovereign politics by simply assuming and insinuating that local Congolese elites were fundamentally incapable of governing an independent country—a justificatory pattern that would be repeated in the peacebuilding missions of the 1990s and 2000s with similar stories about state failure and “peace spoilers” as soon as local actors' ideas of peace became contrary to the UN's.¹⁵

Opposition to Lumumba's view of the conflict led increasingly to distrust and conflict between Lumumba and the UN. This deteriorating relationship was accompanied by several skirmishes on the ground between UN troops and Congolese soldiers. The row culminated in special envoy Andrew Cordier's highly controversial support of President Joseph Kasavubu in his unconstitutional ouster of Lumumba as prime minister in September 1960, which the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) also supported.¹⁶ As Cordier and Kasavubu had agreed beforehand, UN troops closed down the airport and radio station immediately after Kasavubu's announcement of Lumumba's dismissal, which effectively prevented him from mobilizing his supporters or leaving the country.¹⁷ The UN also stood by in silence when, some weeks later, the young Colonel Mobutu, with the active support of the CIA,¹⁸ led a coup d'état and had Lumumba arrested.¹⁹

For Hammarskjöld and the Congo Club, Kasavubu's dismissal of Lumumba and Mobutu's putsch were positive steps toward peace. They viewed Lumumba as immature, foolish, and dangerous—and as such, typical of young African leaders who were unprepared for independence.²⁰ Without irony, their dismissal of African nationalists like Lumumba, Ahmed Sékou Touré, or Kwame Nkrumah was entirely consistent with their critical stance toward colonialism. In his doctoral dissertation on French trusteeship in Togo, Ralph Bunche, who had been Hammarskjöld's envoy to the Congo from May to August 1960, had argued that colonialism did not prepare local elites for independence. As head of the UN's Trusteeship Council since its inception in 1948, Bunche contended that the world's colonies would be in much better hands as trusteeship territories of the UN. The violence that followed Congo's independence confirmed the view of Bunche, Hammarskjöld, and their collaborators that Africans in general, and Congolese in particular, needed the UN's help to govern.²¹ They attributed the country's violence and insecurity to the lack of a functioning state administration, hence anticipating what would become in the 1990s the failed state discourse that justified armed interventions and the responsibility to protect doctrine, which was inscribed in the UN World Summit Declaration of 2006.²²

Hammarskjöld and the Congo Club quickly adopted the view that Belgium had only intervened to restore order and to help reconstruct the country. In the view of the Belgian government, the troops in the Congo were simply protecting Belgians and other Europeans in areas where law and order had broken down. Hence, the Belgian government did not feel the least bit targeted by the UN resolutions. In Belgian eyes, the Congo's sole problem was Lumumba's anticolonial nationalism, not the well-intended presence of Belgian military personnel and so-called "advisors." After all, the former colonial power knew best what was good for the colony, independent or not. Belgium's European allies and the United States supported this view, and on these grounds Belgium steadily, if not openly, disputed the UN's prerogative to reestablish law and order as formulated in UN Resolution 142.²³ France and Great Britain particularly did not wish to see the Congo mission establish a precedent for UN-led decolonization.²⁴ By adopting a similarly paternalistic view of the Congo, UN officials gave in to the liberal discourse of protecting law and order, private property, and lives. They, hence, defended a specific view of the events in the Congo that gave more weight to U.S. interests than to the communist world.²⁵

The Soviet Union did not fail to notice the decidedly liberal tone of the UN intervention. Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev took it on himself

to vigorously attack Hammarskjöld as a “lackey” of the United States, and to initiate a radical proposal for reform of the UN Secretariat during the 1960 General Assembly session.²⁶ Instead of one Secretary-General, the Secretariat should be staffed with three secretaries: one from the Soviet sphere of influence, one from the West, and one from the nonaligned states. The proposal cited the Congo mission as living proof that “there are no neutral men,” and that therefore the diversity of views on what constituted world peace or a breach of world peace should be institutionalized within the UN. Hammarskjöld replied to the troika proposal by arguing that the Secretary-General is neutral by the very definition of his function as the first civil servant of the UN and, consequently, acts in the interest of humanity and not in the interest of a particular state. Hammarskjöld repeated this argument three times: once in a direct reply to Khrushchev the day following his proposal in the General Assembly, a second time in December 1960 in front of the Security Council, and a third time in a public lecture at the University of Oxford in May 1961.²⁷

The discourse of international civil service and neutrality can be seen as attempts to forge a standpoint equidistant to all three fronts. It drew on the Secretary-General’s main capital, namely the legal capital created by the UN Charter, which gave the Secretary-General a slim space of autonomy, primarily through Articles 99 and 100. Hammarskjöld’s civil servant concept widened this space to include a much larger authority to make decisions about peacekeeping and peacebuilding *practices*. In this way, Hammarskjöld steered the debate away from questions of how peace should be defined in a political sense, who should have political responsibility for keeping and building peace, and who would be involved in such peace, to the question of how and by whom peacekeeping should be practically executed. The political questions raised by the Congo mission were replaced by the practical question of how missions should be organized and managed, without acknowledging any political quality to this management. The stakes of the peacebuilding field hence changed from being about the question of peace, *sui generis*, to the question of peace administration, with the understanding that administration by itself was politically neutral.

Finding a Place for the UN in Carved-Up World Politics

The Congo mission continued despite the refusal of the Soviet Union and later France to support it financially because, for a while at least,

the United States had decided to use the UN as its spearhead in Africa.²⁸ When, in October 1960, the CIA-friendly Special Envoy Andrew Cordier was replaced by the Third World-minded Rajeshwar Dayal, and the UN proceeded to remove foreigners (mainly white mercenaries who had been hired by the Katangese) from the Congo and Katanga in 1961, the United States withdrew its support, too. Dayal became the subject of a vicious media campaign, and Hammarskjöld had to replace him only months after he took office;²⁹ one year later, a similar fate awaited Special Envoy Conor Cruise O'Brien, who continued to expel foreign advisers to the Katangan government.³⁰

The Congo mission made it unmistakably clear that no UN mission would succeed without U.S. support. The *de facto* power of the United States to steer UN missions fundamentally undermined their legitimacy, and for decades to come the Security Council did not create a mission as large as the Congo mission.³¹ Up until the 1980s, the UN was not called on to intervene in any major Cold War situation, whether related to decolonization (e.g., the Algerian war) or to superpower politics (e.g., the U.S. war in Vietnam or the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan). Even the peaceful reordering of Europe at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s happened without any UN contribution. The UN was involved in neither the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, nor in the process of Germany's unification—even if, as a sign of the Soviet Union's good will under Mikhail Gorbachev, UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar mediated the Soviet departure from Afghanistan at the end of the 1980s.

The Cold War hiatus in the UN Security Council's haggling over what constitutes the Secretariat's rightful authority to administer peace reduced opportunities to practically claim the peacebuilding field. Peacebuilding shrank back to small, clearly defined military peacekeeping operations—that is, the physical separation of warring parties and the military monitoring of geographical separation boundaries, in theaters that were either of no interest to either of the Cold War parties (Cyprus, for example) or which were, indeed, so complex and dangerous that both superpowers shied away from obvious and decisive involvement (including most Middle East crises).³²

Although Gorbachev's cooperative stance on multilateralism, the end of Ronald Reagan's presidency, and, finally, the end of the Soviet Union brought fresh opportunities to involve the UN with peace and war in the world, the enabling and disabling power of the United States did

not diminish in the 1990s, as Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali would learn some thirty-odd years after the Congo crisis.

Frequently, images of peacebuilding as a sleeping beauty rising from a thirty-year sleep are used to explain the sudden and extraordinary growth of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions between 1985 and 1995. The tacit implication of this representation is that peacebuilding today is a functionally appropriate solution to conflict situations in the world, and that it is evolving or even learning—the current emphasis on human rights being, all other things being equal, the normatively best answer to conflicts.³³

Yet the continuity of the peacebuilding field was and is only partial. The basic mechanisms that created the field in the first place—namely, states quibbling over the right interpretation of peace and the practical appropriation of a peacebuilding space by the UN, its affiliated agencies, and other peacebuilders—have indeed remained the same. However, the motivations for the wrangling, the discourses of justification and rationalization, as well as the strategies of positioning, have changed, pushing and shoving peacebuilders in various directions.

Yugoslavia as Playing Field for a New Division of Labor

When Yugoslavia was about to break up in the late 1980s and 1990s, the world was a very different place than it had been during the 1960 Congo crisis. Most notably, the positions of central state actors had changed: Europe had risen in power and made this abundantly clear in claiming a prerogative to resolve the Yugoslav crises. The Soviet Union, meanwhile, had rapidly been losing its status as a superpower and no longer rivaled the United States; the United States was grappling with its new position as hyperpower (as former French foreign minister Hubert Védrine dubbed the Cold War victor); and most nonaligned countries (with the notable exception of regional rising powers such as India, Nigeria, or Brazil) were now nothing more than poor.

In this new constellation, the UN was reduced to being one actor among many, and many more than in 1960; Hammarskjöld's spearhead argument that the UN could be a neutral force between rival powers had lost its entire foundation. Although rejected at the time by the Soviet Union and, less violently, by France, and met with caution by Great Britain, Hammarskjöld's neutral civil service discourse had allowed the UN

to keep its symbolic capital of being an international law-based organization somewhere in-between Cold War opponents. The international civil service discourse in particular had allowed so-called small states, including the Nordic countries and Canada, and the Non-Aligned Movement to rally around the UN Secretariat in quarrels with the five permanent members of the Security Council. Newly independent states had most notably drawn on this discourse to claim the UN as a neutral space, and to keep the Cold War superpowers and former colonial powers in check, at least verbally.³⁴

Politically marginalized and with reduced legitimacy as a neutral actor in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the UN had to find a new justificatory discourse on which to base its authority to define and defend world peace. In the Yugoslav crisis, its most formidable competitors would be the emerging European Union, a revived North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United States, each of which sought, albeit in contradictory back and forth positioning, to establish themselves as central authors of peace in the world.

Narratives of the Yugoslav implosion and how it was (mis)managed by external actors abound. The aim of this section is neither to discuss these often hugely contradictory stories nor to add new arguments.³⁵ Rather, the section will take a different perspective on the Yugoslav wars in order to examine how conflict resolution management in the 1990s, or its failure, shaped the peacebuilding field. As with the Congo conflict, the argument will be that the peacebuilding field emerged and became consolidated in the Yugoslav case as a *default* space of action. This default space was opened up not by cooperation between third actors—what is often euphemistically referred to as “the international community”—but rather by the distances these actors built between each other in the world political space. “Distance” does not have to mean “antagonism,” but if world politics occur in a power relational space, actors seek to establish their position *relative* to that of other actors.

CONFIGURATIONS IN THE EARLY 1990S

The Yugoslav case is in many respects different from the Congo case, but the stakes for peacebuilders were the same—namely, the authority to define not only what world peace is but also, and maybe even more important, the ways and means of maintaining it as well as identifying its legitimate guardians. The most important difference with the world

political situation in 1960 was the greater complexity of the larger world-political field, as many more actors had become involved after the Cold War. In the Congo crisis, the UN Secretary-General could quite easily justify the Secretariat's role as central coordinator, buffer, mediator, and scapegoat for Cold War rivalries, on the one hand, and decolonization conflicts, on the other. In the case of the Yugoslav wars, the UN Secretariat General faced competition from a large number of intergovernmental bodies, including the European Communities (EC), NATO, and the OSCE (the successor of the 1970s Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe). The simplistic bipolar force of the Cold War had given way to a multipolar world, which, additionally, was complicated by local and regional state rivalries, for instance, between EC member states. The distribution of economic, financial, military, legal, and symbolic capital between these various actors was extremely uneven, creating a situation of complex mutual interdependence.

While the expansion of peacekeeping operations, the successful implementation of the UN's first Chapter VII mission in Iraq, and the subsequent humanitarian assistance to the Kurdish population in northern Iraq, had strengthened enormously the UN's legal and symbolic capital as central keeper of world peace, it had left the organization in debt to the economic and military power of the United States, France, and Great Britain. This dependence became shockingly apparent when the 1992 humanitarian intervention in Somalia failed due to enormous strategic mistakes by U.S. forces, but the UN were left to take the blame for this fiasco. The Gulf War had particularly raised the military capital of the United States, and the UN's failure to fend off the scapegoating of the Somalia disaster upheld the strong position of the United States. Because of its strength NATO, too, rose from its ashes in the early 1990s at the same moment when it should have been rapidly losing symbolic capital with the reunification of Germany and the loss of the Soviet threat to western Europe.

The peaceful unification of Germany and the boost to the European integration process strengthened not only the symbolic capital of the EC and the four World War II allies (and permanent members of the Security Council), it also strengthened hopes for greater economic and financial capital to be gained from deeper integration. The organization that gained the most in terms of economic and symbolic capital, however, had been the OSCE, which had been transformed from an informal and irregular meeting of heads of state into a formal organization with buildings, budget, and mandate.

Initially, nothing in the buildup to the Yugoslav wars begged external intervention, and certainly not the kind of intervention that eventually occurred. *Prima facie*, the Yugoslav crisis of the end of the 1980s was the failure of its federal system to cope with economic pressures and internal political changes. Yugoslavia's internal problems became a security issue as part of Europe's reordering after Germany's unification, the end of the Warsaw Pact, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These three events equipped some actors, such as Germany, with new resources; deprived others, such as Russia, of resources they had held before; and allowed completely new players, including the OSCE, to get on board. The way external actors dealt with the Yugoslav crisis and its wars needs to be seen in the greater picture of how these actors eventually negotiated their respective positions in world politics.

All throughout the period that started with Yugoslavia's financial and federal crisis in the late 1980s and eventually ended with the bombing of Serbia in the spring of 1999 and the subsequent deployment of the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the UN was marginalized. Neither Pérez de Cuellar (until 1991), Boutros-Ghali (1992–97) nor Kofi Annan (from 1997 on) referred to Article 99 of the UN Charter, which allows the Secretary-General to bring a matter of world peace to the attention of the Security Council. Despite its central position as the sole legally authorized peace enforcer in the world, the UN was effectively sidelined in all major decision-making moments from the beginning to the end of the Yugoslav wars.³⁶

In 1991, when the federal crisis in Yugoslavia escalated into wars in Slovenia and Croatia, the UN already had its hands full with peacekeeping, peace-brokering, and peacebuilding missions in Cambodia, Somalia, Iraq, Namibia, Angola, El Salvador, Western Sahara, and Nicaragua. These missions were draining financial, military, and other personnel resources from the United Nations as well as the contributing states. However, they also represented a beacon of hope for a new golden age of peace following the Cold War. The UN of the early 1990s did not lack confidence that it had a crucial role to play in the new world order; on the contrary, it was very confident of its new importance, and yet it was overstretched. Marrack Goulding, the under-secretary of what would become the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, was particularly opposed to any further engagements by UN peacekeepers.³⁷ Yugoslavia not only appeared to be peripheral to the UN's main geographical foci in Africa,

Asia, and Latin America—Boutros-Ghali would denounce the Yugoslav wars as “white men’s wars”—it also looked like a European problem that should properly be dealt with by Europeans.³⁸ Boutros-Ghali’s reaction to requests for UN peacekeeping was therefore to avoid serious commitments. Instead of proactively countering the sidelining of the UN, notably the indecision of the UN Security Council, by proposing actions and legal documents that would strengthen the Secretariat’s autonomy (as Hammarskjöld had done in the 1950s), Boutros-Ghali retreated into narrow definitions of conditions that needed to be met for peacekeeping (“peace to keep”), and bitterly complained when the Security Council imposed further demands for action on the Secretariat.³⁹

Yet Boutros-Ghali’s circumspection was not unfounded, as the Security Council members were particularly stingy with their contributions. It had already been difficult if not impossible to sufficiently staff ongoing UN missions in Africa and Asia. In the case of Yugoslavia, however, the restraint of other UN members, which usually sent, financed, and equipped UN peacekeeping, was particularly strong. For non-European contributors such as India, Yugoslavia was not a top priority. Hence, Western countries, including France, Great Britain, and other non-Security Council members such as Canada, provided the majority of troops for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR)—yet they considered these to be a high price to pay for their ability to have a say in the debates over what would be called the “new European security architecture.” The United States, on the other hand, was determined never to send any ground troops to Yugoslavia in order to avoid another debacle like Somalia, which had left the first Bush administration badly battered by hostile domestic public opinion.⁴⁰

Boutros-Ghali’s restraint in insisting on the UN’s central role in peacemaking and the struggle over defining the who, how, and what of European security left space for the active engagement of other organizations and foreign policies, most notably the OSCE and NATO. In the confusion of the early 1990s, the Yugoslav wars had great potential to unify European states, Russia, and the United States over the interpretation of security risks, as it had the great potential to tear them apart over the question of how to respond to them.

All state actors developed a narrative of the reasons for the Yugoslav disaster, which had as a subtext the preservation of so-called European values, whatever these might be.⁴¹ All agreed that the wars resulted from ancient ethnic hatred, and either Serbian aggression, a point of view

particularly defended by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright,⁴² or, in Russian public opinion, Serbian assertiveness.⁴³

The economic and financial crisis that underscored the implosion of Yugoslavia's federal structure was, in political circles, never seriously discussed as the cause of the wars, for good reason.⁴⁴ In post-Cold War Europe, any doubts about the moral and political superiority of market liberalism, financial liberalization, privatization, and democratic governance were ideologically inadmissible. Whether in Russia or Croatia, Germany or France, Europeans strived to outdo one another in praising the neoliberal restructuring of their economies, deflating real wages, reducing public debt, privatizing whatever public services could be privatized, and administering shock therapies of market liberalization and financial liberalization to former state-managed industries. While the liberal outlook of the Congo mission in the 1960s was the Secretary-General's ideological choice, the liberalism of the 1990s was a global consensus.⁴⁵

The triumph of liberalism was not the only reason why the UN's thinking about peace or war was destitute of all economic critique. Since the failure of its new economic policy in the 1970s but clearly since the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s, the UN had lost its capacity to compete with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in disputes over global economic policies. Compared to the financial capital of these two organizations and the backing they received from major state actors—for instance, through intergovernmental fora such as the G7, G8, or G20 summits—the UN had abandoned any meaningful economic engagement.

Hence, the framing of the Yugoslav conflict as ethnic conflict in the 1990s constituted the common reference and shared narrative of all involved actors, whether states or the UN. This excluded from the outset a number of possible conflict resolution pathways and definitions of peace, particularly those that would have had an impact on the economic or political structure of Yugoslavia and its republics and their place in the world economy.⁴⁶ Instead, conflict analyses of the time and proposals for conflict resolution concentrated on the question of the territorial integrity and unity of Yugoslavia, its borders, and the self-determination of its people, thereby often accelerating the federal disintegration and even the violence.⁴⁷

Hammarskjöld's legacy of insisting on sovereignty as the territorial principle and indisputable basis of peacekeeping fit this new discourse as well as a square peg fits a round hole. Everything that Hammarskjöld

(and his successors, and all former colonies in the General Assembly) had declared inviolable during the Congo crisis and similar incidents that followed—sovereignty, borders, territorial unity, noninterference in constitutional matters—was now at stake in the Yugoslav conflict. And the UN—Secretariat, Security Council, and General Assembly alike—had to deal with them. The definition of the conflict as being about ethnicity and self-determination—or rather the acceptance of this definition by key actors in Yugoslavia—raised an array of questions that could be answered in many different ways. Should a state be allowed to break up? Who could define the new borders of a broken-up state, and on which grounds and how? What constituted a legitimate claim of self-determination? What was a people, and how much national unity was needed to allow secession? What were appropriate majority-minority relations and how should they be formulated—legally, politically, institutionally, culturally, and so forth? There were many more detailed questions relating to those mentioned here, and the list is, obviously, not exhaustive. The range of possible answers is equally diverse and daunting, and they constituted a formidable source for diplomatic discussions that would allow every single actor involved to take a position distinct from all others, and even to change their discourse over the course of the decade without losing anything in distinctiveness.

PUBLIC OPINIONS PUSHING NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Such vagaries were necessary for a large variety of reasons, very few of which had anything to do with the question of Yugoslavia itself. The democratic states involved were under pressure from the media and public opinion⁴⁸ to “do something,” and they all experienced watershed elections during the Yugoslav wars: in 1992 George W. Bush lost the U.S. presidential election to Bill Clinton; in 1994 John Major lost the British election to New Labour under the leadership of Tony Blair; and, that same year, conservative Jacques Chirac became president of France, ending thirteen years of socialist presidencies.

German, French, U.S., Italian, Russian, and British governments, political parties, and media were furthermore subject to intense lobbying. All Yugoslav actors had developed excellent lobbying capacities through their diaspora communities, some of them even using commercial public relations firms.⁴⁹ However, the diaspora communities were not equally represented in all countries: while Croatian diasporas

exerted substantial pressure on Germany, Austria, and the United States, Serbian groups lobbied much more forcefully in Russia, and in France the Bosnian-Muslim pressure of Bosnian leader Alija Izetbegović was particularly successful in mobilizing public opinion. These groups played masterfully with the various narratives of ancient hatred, the impossibility of interethnic peace, and Cold War schemes of democratic forces vs. communists.⁵⁰

Russia, too, underwent fundamental and deep changes to its political, economic, and social constitution with the failed putsch of August 1991, the election of Boris Yeltsin as president, and the end of the Soviet Union. In all these domestic power struggles, the Yugoslav question became a placeholder for debates over global order politics and security. Bosnia became a symbolic measure of Russia's power status in Europe and the world, and the more the United States and some European countries pressed for an exclusive role for NATO, the more Russia opposed them.⁵¹ Consequently, the United States in particular but also France and Great Britain sought to keep discussions over enforcement measures out of the Security Council once NATO had been designated to monitor the no-fly zones in June 1993 and, hence, been given de facto leadership in UNPROFOR.

JOCKEYING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Questions about global order politics and security could not be answered without also discussing and manipulating the international institutions that should order and guarantee peace: the European Community, NATO, and organizations such as the CSCE (later to become the OSCE), the Council of Europe, or the West European Union, which had been conceived as the EC's military arm and was now being revived in the process of deepening and widening European integration (only to be finally dissolved in 2009). The survival of NATO and, if possible, the CSCE remained a constant of U.S. foreign policy from the first President Bush to President Clinton, whereas France, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy were largely preoccupied with various plans and projects intended to strengthen the role of the EC, and, consequently, its core member states—yet without always strengthening all member states to the same degree.⁵²

As a result of these widely differing agendas, most major actors involved proposed different ways of solving the Yugoslav conflict, with, at

times, two or even three mediators at work. Only one of these was sent by the UN and, invariably, the UN envoy had been summoned to work with the EC or U.S. representative. Given all this pulling and shoving, the UN had very little space. The General Assembly was largely and successfully avoided by all major state actors, and the Security Council was usually used to provide an a posteriori blessing over decisions taken elsewhere. Most important, the Security Council successfully avoided having the mission in the former Yugoslavia set a precedent for discussion over who should be in charge of UN peace enforcement. The resolutions that increased the capacity of UNPROFOR did so only in order to ensure the free delivery of humanitarian assistance. No resolution gave the mission the power to enforce the various cease-fires or peace agreements that were signed and routinely broken during the war.⁵³

In sum, in the process of pushing and shoving over Bosnia the UN neither defined the armed conflict there as a military threat to world peace nor did it even define the situation as requiring *peacekeeping*. Bosnia (as Croatia before it) was defined as a *humanitarian space* that needed protection, but not as a war zone that needed muscular peace enforcement.

This definition effectively excluded the UN from military intervention and left the armed conflict to be solved by others—by powerful states such as the United States and international military organizations such as NATO. The Contact Group, an informal meeting of the United States, Germany, France, Great Britain, and Russia, emerged as a powerful competitor to the UN Security Council, further demonstrating the gap that had widened between the UN Secretariat and powerful states.⁵⁴ Eventually, with the Dayton peace agreement, the UN was kept out of Bosnia entirely, deprived of a role in both the military protection force (SFOR, or Stabilization Force) and the civil administration of the country through the Office of the High Representative, which had been established and staffed by the Contact Group.⁵⁵

Peacebuilding as Default Space

In early 1999, the NATO bombing campaign in Serbia seeking to force the withdrawal of Serbian police and paramilitary troops from Kosovo made clear the extent to which institutions such as the Contact Group, the OSCE, and NATO had replaced the UN. The UN Security Council and Secretariat were not involved in any major decision concerning this

military campaign. The bombing took place without a Security Council resolution. In the strict sense of international law, the NATO bombing of Serbia was a war of aggression against a sovereign state—exactly the sort of event that the UN, according to its Charter, was supposed to prevent.⁵⁶

With the military side of maintaining world peace taken out of the hands of the UN, the organization defended its role in the global ordering of peace mainly through activities that ran parallel to military security. Humanitarian assistance played a lead role in these, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) being the lead agency. The UNHCR, pushed by its own agenda and strategies, itself seized the opportunity to expand its role, mandate, and operations substantially. Shortly after the Dayton peace agreement, the UN also took over other peacebuilding roles that gave it a substantial presence on the ground, including policing, law enforcement, and, together with the OSCE, preparation for elections. The same would happen after the NATO bombing of Serbia where the UN's multiple peacebuilding roles, ranging from humanitarian assistance to the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the reorganization of public services such as public health and schooling, would be institutionalized in the interim administration set up by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

Narratives and Canonization

If the Yugoslav wars were the most long-lasting tragedy of peacekeeping, the most dramatic and shameful episode of the UN's peacekeeping failures was the blatant denial of the Rwandan genocide of 1994.⁵⁷ In March 1999, UN Secretary-General Annan commissioned an independent panel to investigate the UN's role in the Rwandan genocide of 1994.⁵⁸ The timing of the UN inquiry was not incidental. By 1999 the UN effectively had been deprived of any prospect for militarily living up to peacekeeping expectations. The conflicts in which the UN intervened did not allow for peacekeeping in the narrow sense of a geographical separation between warring parties, and the missions that were deployed were obviously understaffed, underequipped (despite the huge increases in expenditures), and ill-mandated as UN Security Council resolutions reflected a strict minimum consensus among the permanent five members of the Security Council (the P5), and not visionary plans for peace. In Srebrenica and Rwanda at least, the signals UN peacekeepers

gave appear to have encouraged the warring parties to believe they could commit war crimes and genocidal acts with impunity. The default space of peacebuilding, consisting of humanitarian assistance, maintaining law and order, and additional civil administrative tasks, set up the façade of UN and international community action,⁵⁹ but by 1999 the UN had ceded its position as world peacemaker to NATO, a couple of powerful states (notably the United States), and regional organizations like the European Communities/European Union.

The UN Secretary-General was in all these cases sidelined by the five permanent members of the Security Council, and in particular by the United States. Neither Boutros-Ghali nor Annan were able (or willing) to imitate Hammarskjöld's proactive politics of steering the Security Council through preemptive resolutions and coalitions of small states. However, they did seek to preserve the UN's symbolic capital by repossessing the legitimating discourses of the *de facto* interventions. As the UN's legitimization remains a fundamental ingredient of intervention for all actors involved, the Secretariat's urge to put justifications into writing was widely supported by Security Council members. They not only supported the Secretary-General's initiative to launch an independent inquiry into the role of the UN in the Rwanda tragedy⁶⁰ but also sponsored the General Assembly resolution brought by Bosnia and Herzegovina for an inquiry into the role of the UN in the fall of Srebrenica.⁶¹ In the context of seeking legitimacy for the illegal bombings of Serbia, both reports provide a forceful argument for humanitarian intervention, underscoring Annan's assertion that the Kosovo war was illegal but legitimate.⁶²

These two reports were important milestones in a long series of reports and commissions that would reflect on the peacebuilding space and how it could and should be filled by the UN, its affiliated organizations, and civil society in its wake. From Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* in 1992 to the 2005 report "In Larger Freedom," which would form the basis of the World Summit Declaration of the UN's sixtieth anniversary, these reports seek to establish a rational and functional history of UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding.⁶³ They allowed for redesigning peacebuilding and redrawing the vision of humanitarian intervention according to political realities.⁶⁴ The post-1999 reports draw up the lists of legal tasks and practical challenges, enumerating long lists of "lessons learnt" or "lessons to be learnt" and "challenges ahead."⁶⁵ These lists complement other writings, namely the many proposals to reform the UN, and set the foundation for the institutionalization of peacebuild-

ing with the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2005. They represent a form of canonization of the peacebuilding space.⁶⁶ They not only emphasize routinely the need for peacebuilding, they also define the areas that make up peacebuilding: the rule of law, the protection of women and children, humanitarian assistance, and policing and order politics. They designate the legitimate actors and, most obviously with the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, the best mechanisms for coordinating them.

In these highly ritualized reports peacebuilding becomes an activity that is fundamentally unproblematic and only suffers from an array of practical failures due mainly to a lack of resources, or, if resources are available, to the resistance of local enemies (spoilers). Creating peace can only be what it is—namely, the provision of humanitarian assistance and the protection of vulnerable groups. The central question of peacebuilding has become the identification of such vulnerable groups, and these reports are embedded in a much larger body of literature on ethnic and identity conflicts, democratization problems, economic motives for civil wars, state failure and fragile states, and terrorism. This nexus of peacebuilding and academic debate is discussed in more detail in chapter 4 on the boundaries and overlaps of the peacebuilding field. Here, suffice it to say that UN reports since the Agenda for Peace in 1992 have established a powerful narrative of peacebuilding as legitimate and the only reasonably and rationally conceivable solution to conflicts.

Conclusion

Since Khrushchev's troika proposal, peacebuilding has, in the UN, never been discussed in political and ideological terms (who should have the legitimate authority to decide over peace?), but in practical and administrative terms. It is in this area that the Secretariat has its widest authority and, consequently, its widest scope for action. In the Congo crisis already, the deeply political debate over the Congo's form of government and national unity had been replaced by questions of material infrastructure (roads), humanitarian assistance (how to get medicine and food to remote villages), and other technically and administratively manageable matters such as inoculation, water and sanitation, or the construction of refugee camps.⁶⁷ In this respect, the peacebuilding field becomes also tangibly visible in jeeps, compounds, food parcels, containers, and so forth.⁶⁸ Because peacekeeping's buffer zone concept

remains politically impossible to realize, boundaries for the practical and discursive space of peacebuilding in complex situations like the Congo or former Yugoslavia are defined by highly mobile yet nevertheless highly visible signposts.

The peacebuilding space exists relative (even though not proportionally relative) to the political space of other actors in world politics. Paradoxically, this means that during the Cold War the *peacekeeping* space was quite clear-cut: wherever the political and military space of the superpowers was diminished, the UN could impose its peacekeeping. This was the case in crises that were of no interest to the superpowers (Cyprus, for example); or, to the contrary, of such burning interest that they risked enflaming the entire world (e.g., the Middle East); or which had burned down to status-quo wars (the Cold War proxy wars in Latin America, in Africa, and Asia in the 1980s such as Angola or Mozambique). If interventions happened, then it was possible to physically separate warring parties, to set up green lines and demilitarized zones, and to create a space in which the UN or UN-mandated mediators could negotiate peace agreements and truces during which further peace negotiations could take place (or where at least the truce could be frozen).

However, after the Cold War ended with only one hyperpower left, the UN's political space in general and the *peacekeeping* space in particular contracted substantially. The UN was effectively pushed out of the space in which peace negotiations would take place or where the physical separation of warring parties would be possible. Instead, the United States decided, alone or in alliance with its partners, on military deployments and policing in the world. The fact that this ultimately led to an increase in the number of UN peace missions is only paradoxical on its surface. Although the United States had the financial, military, and, in some respects, symbolic capital to enforce its vision of peace in the world, it did not possess the legal capital nor sufficient symbolic capital to do so. The UN furthermore offered an excellent opportunity to mobilize social capital, that is, the largest support possible from other states in the world—to justify military action anywhere in the world. As mighty and powerful as the United States may be, it still needed the UN, first of all to provide the legal and legitimate framework for military interventions. The UN, therefore, needed to be involved.

The Congo mission was the first in which effective peacekeeping was replaced by other activities such as maintaining law and order, providing humanitarian assistance, education and training, managing civil administration, and so on. The wars in Yugoslavia, and especially the lack of

peacekeeping in places such as Srebrenica or Rwanda, led to a consolidation of these activities as a “Potemkin village of care,” in Michael Barnett’s words.⁶⁹ The involvement of more and more actors, such as the OSCE or the UNHCR, additionally expanded the realm of these substitute activities to the point where even soft military aspects such as removing land mines or demobilization of troops are now routinely part of the peacebuilding portfolio.

The peacebuilding space is born out of this necessity of involving the UN. It is a default space that substitutes for the lack of the UN’s actual *peacekeeping* capacity. Yet in sociological terms it is positively filled with certain social groups. Peacebuilding activities such as humanitarianism, the rule of law and justice, reconciliation, and policing are consistent with these social groups and their respective capital configuration. The next chapter therefore will look at the social component of peacebuilding.