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EUGENE V. ROSTOW

NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

McNair Paper Nineteen

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A popular Government,
without popular information or the means of
acquiring it,
is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or
perhaps both.
Knowledge will forever govern ignorance;
And a people who mean to be their own
Governors,
must arm themselves with the power which
knowledge gives.

JAMES MADISON to W. T. BARRY
August 4, 1822

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Should Article 43 of the United Nations Charter Be Raised From the Dead?

Eugene V. Rostow

By reflex action, the collapse of the Soviet Union has stimulated proposals to activate Article 43 of the United Nations Charter, the keystone of the Charter's plan for establishing a standing U.N. military force to prevent and if necessary to defeat aggression. In the Charter such actions are called "enforcement actions," as distinguished from actions of "individual or collective self-defense" like the various Arab-Israeli wars in the Middle East, the war in Korea some forty years ago, or the recent war in the Persian Gulf. Under Article 43, enforcement actions would be ordered and directed by the Security Council and its Military Committee. With the possible exception of the Congo War during the 1960s, there have been no enforcement actions conducted by the Security Council. The Charter rule against aggression has so far been enforced—when it has been enforced at all—only by the use of force in self-defense.

This article has been adapted from Eugene V. Rostow, "Should UN Charter Article 43 Be Raised from the Dead?" Global Affairs *(Winter 1993), pp. 109–24.*

If Article 43 is brought to life, the advocates of such a course say, the world organization would be able for the first time to provide the nations and peoples of the world truly global "collective security," the primary purpose for which the U.N. was founded in 1945. Some American supporters of the idea add—quite erroneously—that the formation of a strong United Nations force under the control of the Security Council would relieve the United States of the burden of serving as the world's chief policeman. In other parts of the world the prospect of a serious United Nations military directed by the Security Council is considered attractive because it would, some think, curb what is often called America's natural tendency toward imperialism.

It is generally believed that only the policy of expansion pursued by the Soviet Union between 1944 and 1989 prevented the implementation of Article 43, and that with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence and recognition of its successor states, the time has come to carry out the original intention of the U.N.'s Founding Fathers. This is a major theme of Russian diplomacy. Senator David Boren of Oklahoma has written an influential article endorsing the proposal. It is reported to have wide support within the Clinton administration. And Helmut Schmidt, the former Chancellor of the German Republic, has issued a strong recommendation to the same effect as Chairman of a High Level Group of the Interaction Council, an international body whose members are former heads of government. Chancellor Schmidt's colleagues in the study on which his recommendation was based include former prime ministers of Great Britain, Canada, Mexico, Zambia, Nigeria, and Portugal, as well as sixteen "high level personalities," ranging from Henry Kissinger to Bronislaw

Geremek.

The intensification of the Cold War during and after World War II was not, however, the sole reason why the Charter plan for collective security under the control of the Security Council has not yet been implemented. While the expansionist policy of the Soviet Union was surely a major factor in causing the delay, the experience of living with the Charter and the institutions of the United Nations for nearly half a century has tempered the naive fervor with which Western public opinion embraced the dream of the United Nations in 1945. The people of the West and their governments still support the United Nations as a moderately useful part of the state system. But the Utopian hopes which had been aroused by the founding of the League of Nations and then of the United Nations have long since been dissipated by the realities of international life. Faith in the idea of the United Nations is a hardy plant, however, and an important force in Western public opinion.

The nation state of the last three centuries has survived and indeed prevailed over every attempt to replace it with a truly supranational entity. The break up of the Soviet Union into separate states; the constitutional conflict in Canada; the disintegration of Yugoslavia; and the widespread resistance in Europe to the Treaty of Maastricht and its implications are only the most recent straws in the wind.

Nationalism is a stronger and more determined political force than supranationalism, and there is little or no chance that this state of affairs will be substantially altered in the foreseeable future. Many practical problems of international life will continue to be managed by international bureaucracies established under treaties. But international cooperation in devising uniform bills of lading or traffic signs, however successful, cannot lead to a truly international military force capable of enforcing the Charter rule

against aggression. The states of the world simply are not confident enough in each other or in the future to give up or even to qualify in any way their inherent rights of individual or collective self-defense. Military actions in self-defense can be initiated by the aggrieved parties without the permission of the Security Council, and carried on "until the Security Council has taken measures to maintain international peace and security." Such military actions in self-defense can be terminated only by an affirmative vote of the Security Council, finding that a continuation of a campaign of self-defense had become a breach of the peace. Such a vote has never been taken. If it were proposed, it would be subject to veto by a permanent member. The right of self-defense is thus the ultimate bulwark of sovereignty. Article 51 of the Charter provides that nothing in the Charter can impair it. And no state will willingly give it up.

The five permanent members of the Security Council are now Great Britain, France, Russia, the United States, and China. Even if Japan and India become permanent members, and Germany is added—or if the French and British seats become a single European Community Seat—it will take a long period of favorable experience before other states are willing to entrust their national survival to the uncertain mercies of that body, however its membership evolves. It proved difficult, expensive, and dubious to obtain unanimity in the Security Council even on so simple a proposition as the condemnation of Iraqi aggression against Kuwait in 1991. After extraordinary efforts by the United States and other countries, a series of resolutions were adopted approving the effort of the United States and its coalition partners to liberate Kuwait and to prevent Iraq from continuing its career of aggression against its neighbors In the Yugoslav crisis, China has indicated that it

would abstain, at best, and Russia has supported humanitarian aid in Bosnia but indicated that it might veto sanctions against Serbian aggression. Furthermore, there have been disquieting reports that Russian troops are assisting Serb as well as Armenian forces as "volunteers."

The war in Korea, which started in 1950 and has not yet been terminated, and the war in the Persian Gulf, which began in 1990 and continues under the regime of an uncertain ceasefire, are not "enforcement actions" controlled by the Security Council, but exercises in collective self-defense approved by the Security Council, an entirely different matter. In Korea, for example, all the Security Council did was to declare the North Korean attack on South Korea was illegal and ask the member states to help South Korea and not help North Korea. In the Persian Gulf war, the Security Council went further, by authorizing economic sanctions and attempting to observe their effectiveness.

The policy of the United States should firmly insist on the right of self-defense without the fig-leaf of a Security Council Resolution, and reject the model of Article 43. The real world of nation states is not yet ready for so bold a step toward world government. Article 43 embodies a noble idea and should be preserved as an aspiration. But the state system has not evolved enough to make it a matter of practical politics. In the rare cases of aggression where the Security Council is close to unanimity, at least among its permanent members, the participants in a campaign of collective self-defense are tempted to invite the Security Council to bless their efforts, thus invoking the powerful symbolism of the Wilsonian idea. In Korea, the United Nations flag was flown, troops wore blue helmets and United Nations arm bands, and there was much talk of a United Nations "police action." From start to finish,

however, this was a political charade, designed to exploit the hopes of the Western peoples for international peace, truly enforced by an international police force. In the Korean war, the Security Council vote was possible only because the Soviet Union was boycotting the Security Council at that moment, as a protest against the fact that Taiwan was holding the Chinese seat. Blue helmets and United Nations flags were not displayed in the Persian Gulf War of 1991–92, although there were elements of confusion there too between the authority of the Security Council and that of the states exercising their rights of collective self-defense. President Bush found it convenient, for example, to get the Security Council to support the use of force in the Gulf before obtaining the reluctant and ambiguous vote of the Democrats in Congress favoring the same course.

In politics, however, deception has a way of becoming self-deception. The Security Council finds it attractive to pretend that it is indeed conducting an enforcement action, and may begin to trespass on authority it doesn't possess—for example, by attempting to stop a campaign of collective self-defense before the necessary measures have been taken to restore and maintain "international peace and security," the standard of Article 51. And the governments engaged in an action of collective self-defense may feel obliged to obey Security Council Resolutions the Council has no right to pass.

However righteous it makes us feel to pretend that exercises in collective self-defense are really Security Council enforcement actions, governments should resist the impulse. Such make-believe can do no good, but it can do a great deal of harm.

II.

The reasons compelling this conclusion are deeply rooted in the nature of the state system which has evolved since the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 and of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. The state system which began to take its modern form after the Congress of Vienna was one of independent states, states deemed "sovereign." They rejected as obsolete the claims of the Papacy or of the Holy Roman Empire to any version of over-all suzerainty. On the other hand, after the terrifying experience of the French Revolution and Napoleon, the statesmen of the day were impelled to adopt a policy of consultation, cooperation, and moderation in conformity with what they often called "the common law of Europe." As the 19th century approached its end, the nightmare memory of Napoleon faded while Bismarck transformed Prussia into a large and uncomfortably ambitious German state, exceeding Austria and France in every dimension of strength, and giving further impetus to the clamor for national independence which was sapping the foundations of the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires. The United States became a major power in that period, although it still clung fiercely to the belief that it was not and should not be involved in world politics. And Japan, too, acquired a modern economy and a modern state, and began to participate in world affairs.

The system for managing the state system during the 19th century broke down in August 1914, and was reconstituted as the League of Nations after World War I. In a condition of shock and paralysis, it stumbled through the

interwar years, and was reconstituted as the United Nations after World War II.

Between 1815 and 1914, the leading powers of Europe consciously sought to manage the state system as a system of peace. Acting together as the Concert of Europe, they succeeded better than those who came after them, although after a hundred years their effort too failed. The provisions of the League of Nations Covenant and the Charter of the United Nations attempt to build on their experience, the Covenant of the League going beyond the mandate of the Concert of Europe, and the Charter of the United Nations going beyond the Covenant of the League.

What makes the Charter of the United Nations so important as part of the legal code of the modern state system is that for the first time in history it purports to condemn the aggressive use of force by and from states as a violation of international law. The Covenant of the League of Nations did not venture a clearcut prohibition of aggression. It called on the states to keep the peace, and contemplated cooling off periods which the Council of the League could ask the parties to a conflict to respect.

The essential dilemma of the Charter system is brought out by the relationship between two provisions of the United Nations Charter—Article 43, contemplating the creation of large-scale armed forces under the control of the Security Council for the purpose of deterring or defeating aggression; and Article 51, safeguarding each state's right to "individual" or "collective self-defense" if it is subjected to or threatened by an "armed attack" (or any other breach of international law of a forceful character). The state system today is a hybrid—an uneasy combination of the classic state system of the 18th and 19th centuries—a system of states deemed "sovereign," on the one hand, and, on the other, shifting groups of major powers who exercise

or fail to exercise their collective responsibilities as the Security Council of the United Nations, or, on economic questions, as the Group of Seven.

The time has come to acknowledge that the United Nations Charter cannot be interpreted and developed to overcome the conflict between these two conceptions. The idea behind the enforcement provisions of the Charter simply do not correspond to the nature of the state system. As Professor Martin Wight of the University of Sussex once commented, the flaw in the Charter as an instrument for keeping the peace is that it offers the world a choice between unanimity among the great powers and chaos. The Security Council can issue legally binding "decisions" (as distinguished from "recommendations") only if all its permanent members agree. And it has never undertaken to use force effectively to carry out its "decisions." But after fifty years or more of the Cold War, the uncertain prospects for world politics makes sustained unanimity among the permanent members of the Security Council and other major powers inconceivable. Their interests, cultures, histories, and attitudes are too different, even on the great central issues of aggression and self-defense, for unanimity to be taken for granted. Since the United Nations could not exist for a moment without the veto of the permanent members of the Security Council, it follows that despite the high hopes invested by the world in the feasibility of U.N. enforcement actions carried out by the Security Council, the nations will have to continue indefinitely to rely for their security on actions of individual or collective self-defense, and not on the Security Council, or the Security Council alone, as peacemaker and peacekeeper. Whether Article 43 is implemented or not, the states will have to maintain substantial military forces as an insurance policy against the

all too probable paralysis of the Security Council by the dissent of one or more permanent members.

III.

The contrast between the procedures used in the Gulf War and those of the futile effort to stop the cascade of violence in the territories of the former Yugoslavian state brings out the force of this conclusion.

In the Gulf Crisis, the key operative language of Security Council Resolution 661 of 2 August 1990 condemned the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait and "affirmed the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense, in response to the armed attack by Iraq against Kuwait, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter." In the same Resolution, the Council "decided" that "notwithstanding paragraphs 4 through 8 above"—the paragraphs of the Resolution decreeing economic sanctions—that "nothing in the present Resolution shall prohibit assistance to the legitimate government of Kuwait." Similarly, Security Council Resolution 678 of 29 November 1990 "authorizes member states co-operating with the government of Kuwait to use all necessary means to uphold [the Council's earlier Resolutions] and to restore international peace and security in the area." Despite the word "authorizes" in this sentence, it is clear from its context that it simply exhorts, approves, and recommends that the states cooperate with the United States and the coalition it organized to defend Kuwait against the Iraqi aggression. The Security Council made no attempt to direct military operations. Indeed, it did not even meet between 29 November 1990 and 16 February 1991, the most violent period of active hostilities. In short, the Security Council did not at anytime treat the Gulf War as an "enforcement action," under its control. It made no agreements with

member states or groups of states about keeping troops "on call" for duty in "enforcement actions" and it did not "call" for such troops, or establish a command to direct their activities. In relation to the military effort of the American-led defense force, the Security Council behaved as it did in Korea, as an interested observer, but not in any sense as the command center of the operation.

In the beginning of the troubles in Yugoslavia in 1991, the United States and its chief Western Allies, France, Great Britain, and Germany, decided not to intervene. Movements for secession in Croatia and Slovenia had stirred anxiety in Serbia. If Yugoslavia was going to break up, as the Soviet Union did, the militant President of Serbia, a "former" Communist, Slobadan Milosovic, decided to bring the large Serbian populations in Croatia, Bosnia, and other parts of Yugoslavia into a unitary Serbian state. After all, Serbia had been a strong independent kingdom before 1914, and was the main component of the Yugoslav state cobbled together at the Peace Conference of Versailles in 1919.

In the beginning, the Allied leaders did not examine the question of intervening in Yugoslavia as a major issue of policy. They consulted about it, and their first reaction was negative. As they did in 1914 and 1939, the British and Americans found it hard to imagine that events in Central Europe could seriously affect their security. They hoped vaguely that a little soothing European or United Nations diplomacy would put out the fire. And they averted their eyes from the possibility that their estimates were too optimistic. The Germans had vivid memories of the difficulties Hitler's armies had experienced in Yugoslavia during the final years of World War II, when the Allies were waging war in Italy. The British thought a military operation there would be worse than Ulster. The French

were more apprehensive, but went along with the others. The reasoning behind President Bush's position was understandable, but wrong. In the Gulf, Bush had courageously followed the path of collective security on which Truman and Johnson had been ambushed and mugged. Relieved by his apparent success in terminating hostilities in the Gulf without a political catastrophe at home, Bush was in no mood to repeat the experiment in the forbidding terrain of Yugoslavia, despite the fact that every poll showed that more than 80 percent of the American people approved what Bush tried to do in the Gulf, but felt that he stopped the war too soon. As the tragedy in the territories of the former state of Yugoslavia deepened, President Clinton followed the policy of President Bush but made it even worse.

At first, the Yugoslav tragedy was treated by the American government as a civil war within the domestic jurisdiction of Yugoslavia. But Yugoslavia was not an indissoluble union of people like the United States in 1861. It was a loose federation of Turkish and Austrian provinces put together at the Versailles Conference of 1919. In any event, Article 2 (7) of the United Nations Charter recognizes that matters normally within the domestic jurisdiction of states can also be breaches of the peace or acts of aggression of concern to the international community as a whole. It could hardly be otherwise for a document approved in 1945 and ratified shortly thereafter, as the world began to live in the presence of nuclear weapons and to learn about Hitler's Holocaust and the gulags and other activities of Stalin. Since the secession of Croatia and Slovenia, and therefore the dissolution of Yugoslavia, have now been widely recognized, "civil war" in Yugoslavia is no longer even a plausible excuse for Western inaction. These states,

and Bosnia as well, are independent members of the United Nations.

Second , President Bush said, the Yugoslav crisis should be handled by the European Community or the United Nations, not by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This never was a serious suggestion; neither the European Community nor the United Nations had the capacity to resolve the crisis in Yugoslavia. As events were to demonstrate with brutal clarity, there was no chance to settle the growing crisis in Yugoslavia unless diplomacy were backed by overwhelming force.

The European Community is an economic and political, not a military entity. And to expect the United Nations to resolve the Yugoslav conflict when the United States, Great Britain, and France were reluctant to intervene, misconceives the nature of the organization. Given the unstable condition of world politics, with the major powers hesitant and undecided, and China and Russia prepared to veto serious measures against Serbia, the Security Council was paralyzed.

Lord Carrington was asked by the European Community to mediate the quarrel, and soon discovered that without the credible shadow of armed force behind him, his diplomatic efforts were treated with contempt. Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen made the same discovery acting as mediators in behalf of the Secretary General of the United Nations. And the United Nations Security Council has been hopelessly mired in the affair, dealing mainly with humanitarian relief to civilians caught up in the hostilities, and avoiding any serious attempt to stop the war.

The crisis in Yugoslavia has steadily gotten worse. Serbia's violent bid to dominate the territory of the former

Republic of Yugoslavia has become an aggression and a threat to the peace at least as dangerous as Iraq's conquest of Kuwait. Both President Bush and President Clinton have remarked that American interests are not directly involved. True, there is no element in the Balkan crisis as directly threatening to the United States as the specter of Iraqi control over 60 percent of the oil reserves of the region. But Iraqi control of the oil was not the only interest of the United States at risk in the Persian Gulf. The most fundamental national interest of the United States in world politics is not oil, but the effective functioning of the state system as a system of peace. During the Gulf War, President Bush explained over and over again that the reason we used force in that conflict was because we had learned during the 1930s that aggression is a threat to the possibility of world public order, and cannot be allowed to stand—indeed, that if relatively minor acts of aggression go unpunished, they simply lead to more serious breaches of the peace later on. He proclaimed with great force that our goal and our national interest in the Gulf War was to uphold the rule of law.

Legally, it is immaterial whether one calls the present situation in Yugoslavia an aggression by Serbia against the other provinces of the former Yugoslav state, or a gross violation of human rights justifying humanitarian intervention. It is both and therefore is a threat to the general peace.

What makes the turmoil in Yugoslavia a matter of urgent international concern is that there are so many Yugoslavias waiting to happen not only in the territories of the former Soviet Union and Empire, but in many other parts of the world as well. Strong groups in Russia are already saying that if the Serbs can do what they are doing with impunity, Russia can move to restore at least the

Empire of the Czars. Unless the Western Allies make a fresh start to undo Serbia's aggression in Yugoslavia, all that was achieved in the interest of consolidating the peace by the Allied victory in the Gulf can be lost for another fifty years. Dictatorship and militarism are the usual end products of periods of anarchy.

Indeed, in Moldava, the Russians, encouraged by the dithering of Western policy in Yugoslavia and Iraq, have already ventured to use their own armed forces, and Russia still keeps troops in Germany, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and the Baltic States. They have even given up explaining to gullible foreigners that their troops are deployed abroad because of a housing shortage at home, although of course they gladly accept foreign aid for the purpose of building homes. The war in Yugoslavia could easily detonate many others, *until the promise of the revolution* Gorbachev started in 1985 is swept away by chauvinism, xenophobia, and tyranny, and international life becomes a nightmare once more.

The impotence of the Security Council as a peace-keeping agency is being demonstrated not only in Yugoslavia but in Somalia and Cambodia as well. Unless the United States returns to the precedent of its leadership role in the Persian Gulf conflict, the risks to the possibility of general peace could easily rival those of the interwar years, the disastrous years between 1919 and 1939.

IV.

It has long been apparent as a practical matter that NATO is the only possible force which could deal with the menace of fanatic and frenetic nationalism in "the entire Euro-Atlantic region." That phrase is the key statement of policy made by the Foreign Ministers of the NATO Allies at their

meeting in Oslo on 4 June 1992. Following the lead of the Harmel Report of 1967, which the NATO Council reaffirmed a decade ago, the Oslo meeting formally recognized NATO's special responsibility for the peace of "the entire Euro-Atlantic region." This striking language could and should represent a far-reaching adaptation of NATO policy to the changes in the structure and dynamics of the world politics which have followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. In October 1992, meeting at Gleneagles in Scotland, NATO went further and decided to start military planning to deal with situations like that in Yugoslavia.

If the rule against aggression is to be enforced against Serbia, it will have to be done by the military and diplomatic institutions of NATO, acting as the predicate for an active alliance diplomacy. The NATO Allies could quickly field first class troops in sufficient numbers if the Serbians allow folly to carry them over the brink. In any event, the NATO forces are there, the creation of forty-three years of devoted work in the task of peace-keeping. They should be used if the use of force proves to be necessary.

Dealing decisively with the crises of this order is not a new experience for NATO diplomacy. The NATO Allies prevented war between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus at least twice in recent years. Such action in Yugoslavia is typical of the kinds of peacekeeping intervention that may well be required of NATO in the years ahead as Europe and the Middle East continue to react to the deep and far reaching reverberations of the end of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin and his regime will not be the final governmental embodiment of Russian nationality. And beyond the problem of wars between national, ethnic, or religious groups looms the question of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, a matter of compelling international concern. It too may well require NATO assistance, preferably at the request of the

Russian, Ukrainian, or Kazakh authorities. As Alexander Yakovlev, a senior Russian official, has said, international cooperation may be necessary in order to safeguard Soviet nuclear weapons, and to dismantle them.

Perhaps the most specious argument offered in favor of the policy of doing nothing in Yugoslavia is that the Serb forces are tough and gave Hitler a hard time during World War II. The metaphor is absurd. In 1939, Yugoslavia mobilized several hundred thousand men. In 1991, the Yugoslav Army had a roster of only 35,000. In any event, managing the peace sometimes requires hard wars, like that in Korea. Armistice agreements in great wars, the break up of empires, and the end of long periods of tension like the Cold War almost invariably produce years of conflict and instability which have to be dealt with before peace can be achieved. That was true after 1815, 1919, and 1945, and it is true again, following the collapse and dissolution of the Soviet Union. Unless the forces favoring peace in such situations act in a determined way, the risk is that they will lose everything they fought for so hard during the war itself.

There is a reason even more fundamental than pragmatic necessity why NATO should be the Allied instrumentality of choice for dealing with the crisis in the Balkans. A purely European solution for the problem, even if it were available, would tend to divide Europe from the United States and Canada, a development which it is our supreme national interest to prevent. The end of the Soviet Union is bringing about a vast shifting of the pieces on the chessboard of world politics. New combinations may emerge, some favorable to the permanent security interests of the United States, and others decidedly unfavorable. Every American understands instinctively that it could be extremely dangerous for our security if Russia is modern-

ized in an exclusive partnership with Germany, and China is modernized in an exclusive partnership with Japan. As Thomas Jefferson remarked in 1814, it can never be in America's interest to have all Europe unified under one monarch. What Jefferson said about hegemony in Europe in 1814 would apply even more emphatically if the possible combination of all Europe today were to include large parts of Asia as well. The wisest and most prudent course for the United States, therefore, is to remain an active participant in world affairs, acting closely with its allies to guide the day-to-day evolution of the state system in directions favorable to us, and seeking to prevent the emergence of yet another aspirant for dominion. The course of aloofness in so fluid a situation means waiting until it is too late to do anything but fight.

President Yeltsin has proposed Russian association with NATO "in the political sphere." Yeltsin's suggestion should be considered carefully and sympathetically. It could be the starting point for a policy of concerted action which could assure the entire Eurasian land-mass a long period of general peace, like that of the century of peace managed by the Concert of Europe between 1815 and 1914. On such a footing, the hopes for general peace generated by the collapse of the Soviet Union could become less chimerical.

In applying this policy to the crisis in Yugoslavia, the nations of the West should make it clear from the beginning that their political goal is not simply the restoration of the status quo ante in Yugoslavia, but the fulfillment of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter by peaceful means. The Charter does not freeze the state system into rigid and unworkable patterns forever. It merely forbids aggression. Yugoslavia, like several other states, was created in the name of an impossible dream: the

thesis that all the "peoples" of the world have a right of self-determination, and should, if they wish, have states of their own. Seventy years of appalling experience with this idea should have convinced everyone that the way in which the peoples of the world are scattered over the earth—and the vast and continuing tides of migration—make it impossible to devise ethnically or culturally homogeneous states, or states which will remain homogeneous indefinitely. There are in fact no such states in the modern world. Even Great Britain includes Scotland, Wales, and part of Ireland as well as England. Rather than yielding automatically to every call for self-determination, however unwise, policy should therefore concentrate on seeking the acceptance by all states of rules and practices which could assure that those who live within their borders share the equal protection of the laws, and the right to participate as equals in the processes of responsible democratic governance. As Sir Isaiah Berlin said recently, "We can't turn history back. Yet I do not want to abandon the belief that a world which is a reasonably peaceful coat of many colors, each portion of which develops its own distinct cultural identity and is tolerant of others, is not a utopian dream." To reconcile the forces of healthy and tolerant nationalism and its violent chauvinist cousins, Berlin says, requires not the imposed uniformity of political or cultural imperialism, but the management of the state system by the great powers as a loose and flexible system of peace. Without peace, nationalism is bound once again to become a force for monstrous evil.

Confronting these problems, Americans like to say, "But we are not the world's policeman." Indeed, President Bush repeated this stale slogan, for years a standard feature of Soviet and Chinese propaganda. Of course we are not the world's only policeman. But we are one of the five

permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations, which is given "primary responsibility" for world peace.

The policy of Russia and China toward the enforcement of the Charter rule against aggression is still problematical. The Chinese vote in favor of the Gulf War was a close run thing, and China abstained in several important Security Council votes on Yugoslavia. And Russia has warned in the Security Council that while it supports humanitarian assistance in Bosnia it may veto serious resistance to Serbian aggression. For the moment, then, the United States is not the world's only policeman, but it is equally obvious that no serious policy for managing the peace is possible unless we are among the policemen. Great Britain, France and the United States, Allies in both world wars and in the Cold War, are and must remain the core of any peacekeeping effort. Other nations will rally to their call, many of them. Even after fifty years, however, it may be impolitic for German or Italian troops to return to the Balkans. But the principles of the U.N. Charter cannot be enforced at all unless Britain, France and the United States take the lead, whether in the name of the Security Council or the principle of collective self-defense. As General Powell remarked during the Gulf crisis, "We are not the world's only policeman, but guess where people look when they need a cop." □

McNair Papers

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1. Joseph P. Lorenz, *Egypt and the New Arab Coalition*, February 1989.
2. John E. Endicott, *Grand Strategy and the Pacific Region*, May 1989.
3. Eugene V. Rostow, *President, Prime Minister, or Constitutional Monarch?*, October 1989.
4. Howard G. DeWolf, *SDI and Arms Control*, November 1989.
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