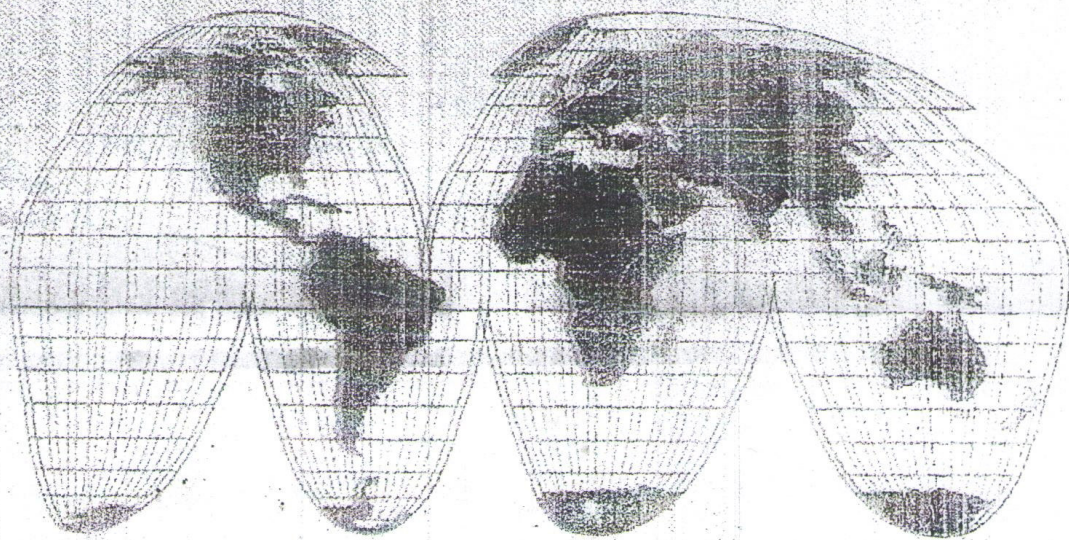


**CHARLES ADENRELE ALADE**



# **Our Ever-Changing World**

**DIPLOMACY, POLITICS, WAR & PEACE**



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## THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION: PEACE & SECURITY

RUFUS A. OLAOLUWA

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### INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Organization (U.N.O.) is an intergovernmental organization of general competence. This means that the U.N.O. is a universal intergovernmental organization whose activities cover all areas of human endeavour and its sphere of influence covers all regions of our contemporary world.

It should be noted that the question of peace is as old as the emergence of nation-States. Immanuel Kant's project for a perpetual peace of 1795 required that all states be republican and that the public law of Europe rest on a federation of free states; he developed the idea of an organization of all states, not merely Christian or European ones.

International organizations of intergovernmental character first appeared not long ago in the 19th century. Apart from objective reasons of political, economic and social character responsible for the creation of international organizations, that time i.e. the 19th century-also witnessed the appearance of generally recognized international legal principles and norms for the regulation of the creation and activities of such organization. The definition of the sphere of legal norms regulating right of personality, competence and



privileges, organizational structure, activities of the organization and their roles in promoting international legal order are some of the important questions that international lawyers answer to in recent times. The earliest major international administrative unions include the International Telecommunications Union (1865), the Universal Postal Union (1874), the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (1875), the International Union for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886), the Anti slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights (1839), the International Union for the Protection of Customs Tariffs (1896), and the Central Office for International Railway Transport (1890).

The first permanent political international intergovernmental organization was the League of Nations which was established in 1919. Its Covenant was drafted at the Paris Peace Conference and was a component part of the 1919 Versailles Peace Treaty. Officially, the aim of the League of Nations was to maintain international peace and security. But the Covenant did not provide for the necessary means for achieving international peace and security. As such, it did not prohibit aggressive wars but only regulated the right of states to wage war. In 1940 the League of Nations actually ceased to exist, but this was formalized only in 1946 after the formation of the U.N.O.. This chapter seeks to look at the U.N.O. as a universal organization responsible for world peace and security, and how it has fared so far.

### **HISTORY OF THE U.N.O.**

World War Two broke out as a result of the failure of the League of Nations to avert the war. It was when the Second World War was actually raging that it became clear to some peace-loving forces that it was necessary to create a new



international organization, based on true democratic principles of international relations, for the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. The U.N.O. was born on this basis. The history of the establishment of the U.N.O. is the history of the struggle of the forces of peace and democracy against the forces of reaction and imperialism. The question of universal system of security was first mentioned in the Atlantic Charter, a joint declaration of peace aims signed by President Theodore D. Roosevelt of the U.S.A. and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain on August 14, 1941. However, Sharmazanashwili contends that the necessity of creating a new international organization after the defeat of the fascist aggressors, was first mentioned in the declaration of the government of the Soviet Union at the International Conference in London on September 24, 1941. He finds it very difficult to believe that the Atlantic Charter contains suggestions for the creation of a new international organization, concluding that even some bourgeois scientists are not in agreement, that the Atlantic Charter is a document in which the idea of a new international organization was first expressed.

One of the intergovernmental documents adopted during the Second World War, where the creation of a new international organization was also put forward was the Moscow Declaration of the Soviet government and that of the Polish government signed on December 4, 1941. It was said in the declaration that the provision of solid and justiciable peace

can be achieved only by a new organization of international relations based on united democratic countries of solid union. When creating such



organization, the deciding moment must be respect for international law, supported by the collective armed forces of all union states.

The conference of 26 states that took place in Washington U.S.A. between December 1941 and January 1942 adopted the Declaration of the United Nations. For the first time, the anti-Hitler coalition adopted the name "United Nations." The Washington Declaration introduced a new official term which consequently became the name of a new international organization. As early as 1941, the allies were calling themselves the "United Nations."

A very important landmark in the history of the establishment of the U.N.O. was the conference of the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom, held in Moscow October 19-30. The Moscow conference paid particular attention to the question of universal security and recognized "the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organization based upon the principle of sovereign equality of all peace-loving states -large or small- for the maintenance of international peace and security." China later adhered to this declaration in principle. The Moscow conference became the first practical step on the road to the establishment of a new international security organization.

The next practical step in the road to establishing a new international organization and a follow-up to the Moscow conference was the conference of four states (U.S.S.R, U.S.A., U.K. and China) held from August 21 to September 28, 1944, in Dumbarton Oaks (U.S.A.). At this conference, a draft of the Charter of the future organization entitled



"Proposals for the establishment of a General International Organization," emerged.

At the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, however, a number of issues (concerning voting procedures in the Security Council, the future of Mandated Territories, the contents of the statute of the International Court of Justice) remained unsettled. They were subsequently settled at the Crimea (Yalta) conference of the Allied powers from Feb. 4 - 11, 1945. It was at Yalta that the decision was taken to call the constituent conference of the United Nations for April 25, 1945 in any of the cities of the U.S.A. with the only agenda of the establishment of a universal organization. Exactly on the pre-appointed date, the United Nations Conference opened in San Francisco with 50 states in attendance. The work of the San Francisco Conference continued for more than two months and ended June 26, 1945 with the adoption and signing of the Charter of the new organization under the name- The United Nations Organization. Fifty (50) states signed the Charter as original members, but Poland, which did not participate in the work of the conference due to some reasons, was left a place (in alphabetical order) in the list of the original members.

On October 24, 1945, after ratification and deposition of ratification instruments to the government of the U.S.A. by the five permanent members of the Security Council of the U.N. (U.S.S.R., U.S.A., U.K, China and France) and the majority of other states, the Charter of the U.N.O. entered into force. That day has been declared as United Nations Day by the decision of the General Assembly in 1947. Since 1947,



October 24 every year is solemnly celebrated by the U.N. and each member state of the U.N. as U.N.O. Day.

The creation of the U.N.O. with the major task of keeping international peace and security has enforced and enhanced the desire of states to establish many other international organizations of economic, scientific, technical and other characters. The U.N.O. has six principal organs, namely, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. Apart from these principal organs, other working organs have been and are being established when the need arises in accordance with the Charter.

### **PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE U.N. SYSTEM**

As earlier mentioned, the U.N.O. was created as a result of the total collapse of the security system of the League of Nations principally to address the issue of world peace and security among other questions.

Peace in international law is a norm of relations in international society marked by absence of overt hostilities between states. International law is generally stated by reference to the state of peace and/ or the absence of it, which is a state of war. Security can be understood to be safety, that is, freedom from danger, risk, etc. In the U.N.O. system, the Security Council, one of its principal organs, is saddled with the responsibility and management of all questions of peace and security. Members of the U.N.O. have agreed that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility, the Security Council acts on their behalf.

The Security Council is composed of 15 members, including the desire of states to establish many other international



five permanent members-China, France, the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom and the United States-and 10 non-permanent members, elected by the General Assembly for a two-year term and not eligible for immediate re-election. The ten non-permanent members in the Security Council are elected from all the geographical regions of the world as follows: Five (5) from African and Asian states, one (1) from Eastern European states, two (2) from Latin American states and two (2) from Western European states and others. Decisions of the Security Council on all but procedural matters are made on an affirmative vote of nine members, including the concurring votes of the permanent members. All member states of the U.N. have undertaken to accept and carry out the Council's decisions. Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter specifies the action to be taken with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, or acts of aggression. Article 39 provides that

the Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to peace, breach of the peace, or act of oppression and shall make recommendations or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42 to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Article 41 provides for measures not involving the use of force to be employed in fulfilment of the provisions of Article 39. These measures may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio and other means of communications and the severance of diplomatic relations.

Currently, the Security Council has imposed an air embargo on Libya in connection with terrorist act purportedly committed by two of its citizens in 1986 which resulted in a



plane crash that killed many people of different nationalities.

Article 42 provides for action that may be taken if necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security if measures envisaged in Article 41 proved inadequate. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of members of the U.N. The only time Article 42 has been fully applied to a member state was in January 1991 when the U.N. forces forced the Iraqi armed forces out of Kuwait. These actions were necessitated by the unlawful occupation and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq. These actions were preceded by more than 20 resolutions of the Security Council starting from Resolution 660 of August 2, 1990 demanding that Iraq should unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait.

The Security Council has for the last few years considered and discussed more than 200 disputes and conflicts amongst states, and in most cases reached satisfactory decisions. The big volume of work being done by the Security Council is shown by the fact that between 1946-1986, the Council conducted 2730 sessions, i.e., it met to consider conflicts and situations on average of 66 times a year, meaning that it met not less than once a week for that period. For its first 40 years of existence (1946-1985) the Security Council adopted 580 Resolutions and decisions on different, political problems concerning maintenance of peace and security. Many of these decisions not only stopped bloodshed, destruction of material values but were important landmarks in solving complex problems in the world.

It should be noted that the organs of the U.N., including the Security Council, do not possess the function of lawmaking or supreme power, but are required to act strictly within the



American states.

The decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters are adopted when none affirmative votes are casted in their favour, i.e., the votes of nonpermanent members of the Council are enough to adopt a procedural matter. All other decisions of the Council on non-procedural matters are adopted by an affirmative vote of nine members of the Council, including the concurring votes of the five permanent members. In this wise, the permanent members of the Security Council can apply veto against any non-procedural resolution. However, nine affirmative votes of nonpermanent members of the Security Council are enough to adopt a resolution if all the permanent members abstain from voting in a matter concerning the maintenance and reestablishment of international peace and security.

From the legal point of view, nonpermanent members constitute a very important element in the structure of the Security Council with definite relevance for promoting normal functioning of the organ. In order to adopt any decision of the Council, apart from the affirmative votes of five permanent members, there is need for a minimum affirmative vote of four nonpermanent members. It follows that seven nonpermanent members have veto power. That is, the decision of the Security Council can not be adopted without their affirmative votes. According to Article 27 of the Charter, an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members is required for a decision of the Council to be made on all non-procedural matters. The expression "including the concurring votes of the permanent members" is now understood to mean that when a permanent member abstains from voting, a decision



of the Council is not disturbed from being adopted. It has also been said that this practice of abstention, though not envisaged in Article 27 (which might easily have added the proviso "present and voting") has been generally accepted and must now be deemed to be a constitutionally valid interpretation of the notion of "concurrence." Although the International Court of Justice did not specifically deal with this question, in its advisory opinion in 1971 on legal consequences for states on the continued presence of South Africa in Namibia, it upheld the practice of abstention by a permanent member as "not constituting a bar to the adoption of resolutions."

The U.N. Charter provides for the concurrence of the votes of permanent members of the Security Council. As a result of this, the difference is shown between questions of procedure and other questions but not between "important" and "not important" questions. It is only in non-procedural decisions, where "concurrence" is required, that the real difficulty arises. In fact, the decisions of June 25 and 27 of 1950 determining a breach of the peace in Korea and recommending member states to take up arms to assist South Korea, were taken in the absence of U.S.S.R. which thereafter denied their legality, although the U.S.S.R. was in breach of Article 28, requiring her "to be represented at all times at the seat of the organization."

Article 27(3) contains a proviso making abstention compulsory, i.e., "in decisions under Chapter VI (Pacific Settlement of Disputes), and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting." This is a restatement of the general principle of law, *nemo iudex in sua causa* (No one should be a judge in his own cause) confined



to" disputes." However, it would not extend to the question of determining the existence of a "threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression under Article 39 of Chapter VII, even though there may be a complete dispute about this question." Hence in this most vital question there is no obligation to abstain, and a permanent member can use the veto to prevent a finding that it has itself (or any other state favoured by its support) has been guilty of aggression. Since 1947, the practice has been that members of the Council have abstained without forcing the Council to determine whether a legal obligation to do so exists.

The decisions of the Security Council are binding on all members of the U.N. As a result, the possibility of appeal is excluded. However, the Council can reexamine its own decision only if new facts which were not previously known emerged and can consequently change earlier decisions. In its activities for many years, the Security Council has developed methods and procedures with which it reacts to or influences world events which were brought to its attention for action. One of such methods is condemnation of this or that state for an illegal act in breach of the aims and principles of the U.N. Charter. For instance, the Security Council many times condemned the South African Republic for its criminal politics of apartheid before that country became democratized in 1993; Israel for its aggressive acts against the Arab states; it condemned in its resolution 660 of August 2, 1990 the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq.

In its peace efforts, the Security Council usually declares its stand on political situations in most regions of the world. In those cases, it usually states its position in any region of the world where there is threat to world peace and security. These



can be found in many resolutions of the Council concerning the conditions in Southern Africa where the apartheid regime was engaged in aggressive activities against the "Frontline" African states. In these resolutions, apartheid is declared a crime against humanity. Recently, in January 1998, it berated the Iraqi government for noncooperation with the U.N. inspection team.

The question of peace and security is too important to be handled only by one organ of an organization created in the main to keep peace and security amongst peoples and states in the world. The Security Council works in cooperation with the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and other principal organs of the U.N.O.

#### a. **The General Assembly: Peace & Security**

The Council at times approves the decisions and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, plans and suggestions of the U.N. Secretary-General. For example, the General Assembly resolutions on the Cyprus question, the complex question of the Middle-East peace process, and the Namibian question, among others, were confirmed by the Security Council. It should be noted that while a matter is being discussed by the Security Council or listed in its agenda for discussion, no other organ of the U.N. can discuss such matter. Thus the priority of the Council in such matters is maintained and the Assembly is kept notified by the Secretary General of the matters with which the Security Council is engaged (Art. 12[2]).

When the Council wishes the Assembly to deal with a matter, it removes the item from its own agenda. This procedure was followed on the Spanish question of November 4, 1946, on the Greek question of September 15, 1947, and on the



complaint of Chinese aggression against South Korea on January 31, 1951. The problem arises where this procedure is not followed and the Assembly places a matter on its agenda whilst it still remains on the agenda of the Council. This occurred, for example, when the Assembly proceeded to discuss the Soviet Union's complaint that the U.S.A. had committed aggression against China by invading Formosa, despite the fact that the Council had decided "to defer consideration" of this same question on September 29, 1950. The Assembly, on November 3, 1950, passed the Resolution on "Uniting for Peace." This was done in the face of the strongest opposition by the Soviet Union. The Assembly thereby assumes the power of the Security Council (Art. 39) to determine a threat to the peace, breach of the peace and act of aggression and to recommend action by members including the use of armed force.

The second issue is the more substantive one of the capacity of the Assembly to establish, even by recommendation, a U.N. force. The U.S.S.R. has constantly opposed this as being in breach of Articles 11(2) and 12 and the force monopoly of the Security Council envisaged under Chapter VI, and, this became the principal Soviet contentions before the International Court of Justice in the proceedings on the request for an advisory opinion on Certain Expenses of the United Nations. The U.S.S.R. took the view that it was under no obligation to contribute towards the maintenance of the U.N. Emergency Force (UNEF) since the force was illegal under the Charter. Briefly summarized, the court in a majority opinion (9 votes to 5) advised that the Security Council had "primary" and not exclusive authority. And that whilst the taking of enforcement action was the exclusive



prerogative of the Council under Chapter VII, this did not prevent the Assembly from making recommendations under Articles 10 and 14. The limitation of Article 11(2) does not apply in such cases, since the "action" therein referred to means only "enforcement action" which is in the nature of coercive action directed against a state. The UNEF "action" was not, in the court's view, enforcement action, but rather "measures" recommended under Article 14. Bowett contends on this matter that whilst the Court did not explicitly hold that the Resolution on Uniting for Peace was a lawful assumption of power by the Assembly, it implicitly did so to the extent that the General Assembly may make recommendations which do not envisage "enforcement action" against states.

#### **b. The Economic and Social Council: Peace And Security**

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) one of the principal organs of the U.N., has no responsibility, neither has it tried to assume any such responsibilities concerning the maintenance of international peace and security. Its functions in the field of socio-economic and cultural development are so wide and complex to the extent that the ECOSOC cannot afford to leave its responsibilities for other functions not assigned to it under the Charter. It suffices to say that without international peace and security there cannot be a conducive forum for socio-economic and cultural development.

#### **C. The Secretary-General: Peace & Security**

The U.N. Charter under Article 7 named the Secretariat as one of the principal organs of the U.N. This organ comprises the Secretary-General and such staff as the organization may



require. One of the powers of the Secretary-General is to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. The power was invoked in June 1950 when the Secretary-General brought to the attention of the Security Council the aggression upon the Republic of Korea and when, on July, 13, 1960, the Secretary-General convened the Council to deal with the Congo crisis. Further is his decision in July 1958 to enlarge UNOGIL (U.N. Observer Group in Lebanon), his discussion with the government of the Union of South Africa in 1960 on the segregation issue. So also is his decision in May 1967 to withdraw UNEF, without reference to the General Assembly (a decision which, on legal grounds, is extremely difficult to justify). Another example is his extending his good offices in 1990 over the Persian Gulf crisis when Iraq occupied and declared its intention to annex Kuwait. However, it should be noted that this power is not frequently invoked as member states are usually quick to bring any threat to international peace and security to the attention of the Council themselves. It should also be noted that the Secretary-General's power under Article 99 of the U.N. Charter is equivalent to that of a member of the U.N. under Article 35 or that of the General Assembly under Article 11(3). The only difference being that, in the discussion of any matter within the Council, the Secretary-General has no vote while all state members of the Council have one vote each.

Another important role of the Secretary-General in the maintenance of peace and security is to act as a mediator and as an informal adviser of U.N. Charter and the Council does not deem it fit to recommend any enforcement, what happens? This is a situation where an aggrieved party has wasted time and resources on a case and got a favorable



judgment and the organ to help in enforcing it is not ready to act. And Article 2(4) of the Charter restrains all members in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. If this happens the party will be left with the only option of "common sense."

## CONCLUSION

With the development of human society, there will always be positive changes in socio-economic and political relations amongst states. These changes are the principal factors in the stability or otherwise in the peace and security situations in the world. When the U.N. Charter was adopted in 1945, the mechanism set up by the organization was very adequate to deal with the security and peace situation then. The U.N. started when most countries especially the so-called, "Third World," were either under colonialism or under the U.N. trusteeship system. By 1998 only a few of countries are still under a kind of colonialism (Palestinian people under PLO and Western Sahara under Polisario) or under the trusteeship system (Micronesia under the trusteeship of the U.S.A.). If the U.N. started with only 50 original members, today it has 190 member states. As a result of changes in status, development, alignment, consequence of attainment of sovereignty and nationalism, countries will always act in a way that the existing security system will need adjustment however small it may be. The advent of the Cold War on one hand weakened the global security situation, but on the other hand it helped in liberating most oppressed nations. With the end of the Cold War, a reverse trend, strengthening the Security Council, is being observed. One of the facts testifying to this trend is the unity and collaboration with which Kuwait was liberated from the claws of Iraq in 1991 by the members of the U.N.

This has also exposed the weakness and insincerity inherent in



the Security Council in the management of security situations in the world. Equal treatment has not been given by the Security Council to security problems. As a result of this, there are suggestions that the Security Council be enlarged to accommodate at least one permanent member from each contingent. In addition to this, it has been suggested that Germany and Japan should be given permanent seats each as their contribution to world development is enormous.

The enlargement of the Security Council to accommodate a permanent member from each continent may not work a magic in solving all the security problems in the world. It will at least satisfy the democratic principles on which the U.N. is based. If equitable justice is to be done, it is by this, it will be seen to be done. One important factor in achieving world peace and security through the U.N. is for all members to strictly adhere to fulfilling the purposes and principles enshrined in the U.N. Charter.

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