

**Peace operations as an integrated part of the UN strategy
for a more secure twenty-first century**

Address

by

Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a privilege for me to be among you today and to address the distinguished members of the Twelfth International Training Course in Security Policy. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank Ambassador Woker and the Geneva Center for Security Policy for associating the United Nations Office at Geneva to this seminar. The two organizations are developing mutually beneficial ties of cooperation and I fully support current efforts at institutionalizing this relationship.

I would like to engage you today on the theme of "Peace operations as an integrated part of the UN strategy for a more secure twenty-first century".

I. The evolving context of the strategy for the promotion of peace, stability and well-being.

If one goes back to the original intentions of the founding fathers of the United Nations and to the compass of the Charter, it is clear that the strategic aims assigned to the Organization involved a broad mandate to promote peace, stability and well-being. The three concepts were closely interrelated at the time and their respective weight was balanced. This initial conception was truly visionary and it allowed for a wide-range of potential actions to be undertaken by the Organization in pursuit of these ambitious goals. Unfortunately it had no time to materialize along these lines.

The reality of post World War II diplomacy was dominated by the rise in Superpowers' rivalry, military confrontation, and the total subservience of international relations to ideological considerations. The logic of the cold war, with

its trail of proxies' wars, has altered the original spirit of the Charter and restricted the activities of the United Nations to a narrow interpretation of this document. The Organization was driven to focus exclusively on the "Peace and Security" components of its mandate. More than that, for many years, "peace" was interpreted only in a negative sense - as the absence of war - while "security" referred to military balance and political alliances.

It is in this context that new tools of peace promotion appeared at the United Nations, and that peace-keeping operations (PKOs), in the traditional acceptance of this term, were created. However, few realize that the term "peace-keeping operation" which has become so closely associated with the United Nations over time, is nowhere to be found in the Charter. It is a concept which lies somewhere between the provisions of Chapter VI (on the peaceful settlement of disputes) and Chapter VII (on peace enforcement) of the Charter, and this explains why peace-keeping operations are sometimes referred to as measures in accordance with Chapter 6.5 of the Charter. The legal basis for such operations is derived from a specific mandate issued by the Security Council for each separate mission.

With the end of the cold war, a new approach was necessary. Devising new parameters was now possible due to the spirit of cooperation which prevailed among the permanent members of the Security Council. A new vision of security began to emerge, as early as November 1989, as a result of a joint Soviet-American initiative. At that time, a new item was introduced on the agenda of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in the form of a draft resolution calling upon all States to "enhance international peace, security and international cooperation in all its aspects in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations". Presented on 3 November 1989 for urgent consideration, resolution A/RES/44/21 was adopted in a plenary meeting on 15 November 1989. This landmark resolution opened the way to an integrated approach to peace promotion. Specifically, it mentioned the role of

the United Nations “in resolving international problems of a political, economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character” and referred to the need to “find *multifaceted* approaches to implement and strengthen the principles and system of international peace, security and international cooperation laid down in the Charter”.

Based on this new all-encompassing method, the United Nations was able to embark upon a more assertive and ambitious approach to peace promotion. This period was characterized by greater activism and success in traditional peace operations. Brian Urquhart, in an essay on the UN after the cold war, recalls the initial successes of this new strategy :

“The Iran-Iraq war came to an end in August 1988 on the basis of a Security Council Resolution...; Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 1988-89 under a plan negotiated by the Secretary-General; Namibian independence was achieved in March 1990 on the basis of a 1978 UN resolution; Cuban forces began staged withdrawal from Angola in 1989; and UN peacekeeping and good offices were employed with growing effect in Central America.”

However today, the end of the cold war is only the visible part of an iceberg. In less than a decade, the world has undergone such significant changes as a result of globalization and technological innovations in the field of information technology, that one can genuinely talk about a change in our civilizational paradigm. This affects relations between States and between human beings. New threats to security are appearing, in the economic or environmental sphere for example, and they tend to be transnational in essence. The existence of global networks of “uncivil society”, including terrorists, drug and arms traffickers, money laundering criminals and other such unruly outlaws poses new challenges to security. As a result, the United Nations original strategy for the promotion of peace, stability and well-being is being revived and even further enlarged.

The United Nations is now operating under a new concept of security. Throughout the Charter, these words are consistently linked and treated as synonymous for all practical purposes. Nowadays, it has become generally accepted that security is a notion of a higher order than peace, involving more than the mere absence of war. Security is a guarantee against violent, chaotic changes and the United Nations has a significant role to play in assuring that the structural changes which typify the end of this century occur in a smooth, evolutionary manner.

In an attempt to identify some of the ingredients of the new definition of security, I should like to focus on the human component which is definitely at the core of the modern concept of security. This week, your programme is dedicated to a reflection on "Democracy, Human Rights, and the Media". In security matters, these preoccupations are echoed by the recognition of the fact that human security should be granted an overriding priority over any other consideration.

Human security means that people should be free from the fear of war, and this of course cannot be limited to international conflicts. It must apply as well to civil wars and this explains why the traditional doctrine of non interference in the internal matters of a sovereign State is being increasingly challenged by those who claim that the international community has "a duty" to intervene for humanitarian purposes. Human security however, is a concept that extends far beyond warfare situations. It also means freeing people from the fear of arbitrary abuses from totalitarian regimes, a concept which carries an implicit mandate for the international community to promote democratization and human rights. Human security means freeing people from the fear of hunger, poverty, and illness. Accordingly, one of the newest ideas to be explored by the Human Rights' machinery of the United Nations is the "right to food". This broad definition of human security involves as well the need to further develop the concrete implications of the right to development.

Focusing the action of the international community around the needs of “the peoples” of the United Nations is thus the prime rationale for the evolution of the concept of security.

Two other characteristics enter the modern definition of security. First, the recognition that security is common. In order terms, one cannot achieve its own security at the expense of others. Secondly, the recognition that security is comprehensive. Political, military, economic, energy, and environmental factors are closely interlinked and must be considered together in order for security to be meaningful at all.

In terms of means of implementation, this implies that the United Nations must pursue its efforts at integrating its peace operations in the broader context of its policies aimed at promoting human rights, development and democratization. It is only through such an integrated approach that the United Nations will contribute to promote a more secure twenty-first century.

II. Peace Operations

Peace operations currently deployed around the world can be classified in four broad categories, based on their composition: global peace operations conducted under the auspices of the United Nations; transcontinental operations undertaken by such organizations as NATO; traditional, sub-regional operations and finally national peace operations.

In the context of the United Nations, after an initial spurt of successful peace operations immediately following the end of the cold war, the setbacks experienced in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes region have somewhat sobered the general optimism of the earlier period and led to a thorough

reassessment of the scope of the United Nations' peace operations. Strategic choices have been made and the new United Nations' policy with respect to peace operations is to concentrate on preventive action and to explore innovative methods of post-conflict peacebuilding.

a) Preventive diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy is a complex task which involves the whole array of political, diplomatic, legal and military tools available to the United Nations. The political/diplomatic tools which can be resorted to in the context of preventive diplomacy mostly overlap those enumerated in article 33 of the Charter on the peaceful settlement of disputes. This article specifically refers to:

"...negotiations, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means..."

All of the above legitimately can apply in the context of preventive diplomacy.

Legal tools available to the United Nations should not be under-estimated either for preventive purposes. The decisions or advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) can prevent disputes from erupting into full-fledged conflicts.

In recent years, the concept of preventive diplomacy has been broadened to include the use of military tools in peace promotion. It is no longer considered anachronistic for the United Nations to deploy troops for preventive purposes. To this day, UNPREDEP, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, is still the only instance of preventive deployment, but it has proved effective and it has created a

precedent. The mission of UNPREDEP was to prevent a spillover of the Yugoslav conflict into the entire Balkan region. Beyond its basic mandate to monitor the border area, UNPREDEP successfully served as a deterrent to external aggression. I should like to emphasize the value of the UNPREDEP example. It demonstrates that with a small, almost symbolic deployment of United Nations peace-keepers, major conflicts can be avoided. In early 1996, at its peak, UNPREDEP involved a 1050-strong military contingent, 35 military observers, 26 civilian police, 73 international civilian staff and 127 locally recruited staff. Roughly 1300 people were able to make a difference and avoid a bloodshed, with no casualties involved. I hope that more use will be made of the preventive deployment option in the future. The only problem associated with this tool is a political one: convincing politicians to get involved at this stage. Indeed, it is difficult enough to get politicians to focus on problems in foreign countries that are already blazing; but it is nearly impossible to persuade them to deal with problems that have not yet occurred. UNPREDEP should be brought to their attention and the cost-effectiveness of this type of operation should be highlighted.

Recognizing the potential of preventive diplomacy, the Security Council, as early as January 1992, adopted a declaration (S/23500) mandating the Secretary-General to give priority to this activity. Accordingly, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali created the Department of Political Affairs to follow political developments worldwide, provide early-warning of impending conflicts and analyze possibilities for preventive action.

In the present context of the reform proposals introduced by Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on 15 July 1997, the priority granted to preventive action is further reaffirmed and the objective of upgrading the global watch system of the Organization is specifically mentioned. Early-warning systems are essential to support the efforts of the Security Council and of the Secretary-General to deter

conflict.

b) Peacemaking

Despite the current trend to promote preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding activities, a significant part of UN peace operations still revolves around the peacemaking process which aims at reconciling political and strategic discrepancies through the use of political, diplomatic and legal tools. In other terms, this UN responsibility lies between the task of conflict prevention and peacekeeping. Means towards that end are in no short supply. They include the comprehensive list set forth in the above mentioned article 33 as complemented by a number of General Assembly resolutions and declarations. The United Nations has an unsurpassed experience in the use of the various tools involved, but the most utilized are probably mediation and negotiation. Both can be undertaken by individuals designated by the Security Council, by the General Assembly or by the Secretary-General.

I would like to stress the particularly important role the Secretary-General has come to play overtime in these matters. His action might be requested under a mandate of the Security Council or of the General Assembly, just as it might be requested directly by the parties to the conflict. In practice however, the Secretary-General has developed the capacity to initiate action under his own authority, an authority he derives from article 99 of the Charter. According to this article "the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion threatens the maintenance of international peace and security". In order to fulfill this duty, he has developed information gathering capabilities, and has used such tools as "fact finding missions" or "missions of inquiry".

Perhaps among the most well-known diplomatic tool available to the

Secretary-General is the function of “good offices”, the exercise of which has often been considered as indicative of the influence of the Secretary-General within the UN system. This tool is among the most popular of all peacemaking options. Examples of “good offices” abound in the history of the United Nations, but I do not believe that an exhaustive enumeration will contribute significantly to this debate. Instead, I would like to draw your attention to the specific case of El Salvador which incorporates many elements typical of present and upcoming missions of “good offices”. First and foremost, it took place in the context of a civil war. Secondly, it was extremely comprehensive in nature, including peacemaking elements (arranging a cease-fire and developing modalities for mutually disarming the combatants) as well as peacebuilding elements (supervising human rights and negotiating constitutional guarantees). Finally, it made use for the first time of a tool which has proved its usefulness, the so-called “Friends of the Secretary-General for El Salvador”, an informal support group formed of States which have a particular interest in the conflict and which might be asked to intervene at critical moments in the negotiation. This instrument has been replicated in the context of other conflicts.

With the proliferation of issues now before the United Nations, it has become standard practice for the Secretary-General to delegate part of his political/diplomatic responsibilities, and to entrust “Special representatives” or “Special Envoys” with some of his mediation responsibilities. These are usually selected from a pool of senior UN staff or among statesmen of recognized experience and international stature. The Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for example, has designated special envoys to revive deadlocked negotiations in the Western Sahara, in East Timor and in Cyprus.

These activities are the most visible in the arsenal of peacemaking tools, but I would like to underline the potential, still vastly underutilized, of the legal tools of

peace promotion and in particular, of the International Court of Justice.

As an example of the ICJ's peacemaking activities, I should like to point to its decision of 25 September 1997, regarding a dispute between Slovakia and Hungary over the Gabčíkovo dam on the river Danube. This decision was deemed "of considerable importance to the development of international law in respect of the law of international water courses, the international environment, state responsibility, state succession and the law of treaties". More importantly perhaps from a peacemaking angle, the decision was greeted with satisfaction by both parties which are now negotiating on its implementation.

Peacemaking may refer to many other activities. They may, for instance, include international action undertaken to improve circumstances which have contributed to produce a conflict or a dispute.

c) Peace-keeping

Peace-keeping actions aim at halting, or at least reducing, the manifest violence of conflicts through the intervention of military forces in an interposition role. The mission of these forces is often to supervise and help maintain a previously agreed cease-fire based on a Security Council resolution, and to assist in the implementation of the settlement procedures, usually including troop withdrawal. Within the United Nations' context, peace-keeping operations (PKO) involves the deployment of a UN presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all parties concerned. Traditionally, PKOs used to be composed predominantly of military personnel provided by troops contributing nations, but they now include police forces and a growing number of civilians. This evolution reflects the considerable extension of the civilian dimension of PKOs.

Currently, there are approximately 22,500 people (military and civilians included) deployed in the context of 16 peace-keeping missions around the world. This represents a decrease from the peak years of the early 1990s. The less successful operations of Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda have led to a reappraisal of the PKO operations. It is now generally admitted that certain prerequisites must be met in order for a PKO to have a reasonable chance of success.

- prospective PKOs must be given clear mandates. This has been repeatedly stressed within the Secretariat. Instructions regarding for instance the use or non-use of force in cases of self-defense are essential to the credibility of peacekeeping operations.

- PKOs must rely on a sound financial basis which is less and less the case. PKOs have traditionally been plagued with financial problems, but the present crisis, caused by the accumulation of Member States' arrears to the PKO budget, is seriously undermining the viability of such operations. According to recent estimates released by the Under Secretary-General for Management, Mr. Connor, the levels of unpaid assessments to the peacekeeping budget have more than doubled since 1992. Peacekeeping cash is dwindling due, inter alia, to the practice of borrowing from this fund to cover the shortfalls of the regular budget. As of September 1997, usable peace-keeping cash aggregated to \$745 million. At the beginning of the year, this figure amounted to \$874 million and it is forecast to reach \$670 million at year's end. This sum is to be weighed against what the United Nations owes to some 80 troops-and-equipment contributing states, an amount estimated to reach \$907 million by the end of December 1997.

- PKOs must develop a rapid deployment capability. Presently, there is about a six month gap between the authorization of a PK mission by the Security Council and full deployment. Past experience has demonstrated the critical need for the UN to establish a presence at an early stage in order to help prevent the further intensification of a conflict. Accordingly, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in his reform proposals of July 1997, recommends that the Security Council and the General Assembly consider measures to enhance the rapid reaction capacity of the United Nations. In this context, a number of States have already agreed to join the Stand-by Arrangements created by the United Nations in 1994. These States are developing units which are kept in a state of high-readiness for immediate deployment upon a decision of the Security Council. This development is particularly promising especially as a total of 67 countries have expressed their willingness to participate in the stand-by arrangements.

These are the main conditions for the effectiveness of future United Nations' peace-keeping operations.

d) Peace enforcement

The prevailing tendency among the international community is to want peace operations to become more "enforcement-oriented"; enforcement action being defined as forcible collective military operation, authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, for the purpose of restoring compliance with international norms, following a major breach in peace or act of aggression.

In the context of enforcement through the use of military forces, two scenarios may unfold: either action is undertaken by a force placed under UN command and control or, as seems to be increasingly the case, action is entrusted to a

multinational force, mandated by the Security Council, but with command and control functions lying outside of UN scope.

At this particular point in time however, the United Nations does not have the institutional capacity to conduct enforcement measures under Chapter VII and it is likely that in the future, the more "robust" mandates will be carried out by ad hoc coalitions of Member States.

By contrast, in recent years, the Security Council has called with increasing frequency for economic sanctions under article 41 of the Charter, as an alternative enforcement tool under Chapter VII. The purpose of such international sanctions is to induce a change in the behaviour of a country which is threatening international peace and not to impose a collective punishment upon that country. This implies that the objectives of the sanctions should be clearly defined, that they should be somewhat proportionate to the objective assigned, and that sanctions should not be applied indefinitely. The issue of the duration of a sanctions regime is a sensitive one as there are still differences among Member States regarding the modalities for the lifting of sanctions. In that respect, I believe that the main criteria remains compliance with Security Council resolutions.

Sanctions raise ethical questions as well, linked to the suffering endured by vulnerable populations and to the collateral damages inflicted upon third countries. Humanitarian considerations have led the United Nations to introduce exceptions to sanctions regime. This was the case inter alia in Haiti, the former Yugoslavia and Iraq regarding medical and food supplies. As for the claims of third countries which have the misfortune of being neighbours or economic partners of the target countries, they can be submitted under article 50 of the Charter. A debate is currently taking place at the United Nations on this matter, with a growing number of participants voicing the opinion that the costs involved in the collective application of

sanctions should be borne equitably by all Member States.

f) Peacebuilding

The essential goal of peacebuilding operations is the creation of structures for the institutionalization of peace. These operations were initially launched in a post-conflict environment, but they have proved their validity for preventive action as well as in conflict situations.

Peacebuilding refers to the practical steps which can be implemented to bring about non-violent changes through activities linked to socio-economic reconstruction, development or democratization. It aims at eliminating the root causes of conflicts in order to prevent their emergence or recurrence. Given a specific cultural background, peacebuilding will promote the most appropriate measures to consolidate peace, create trust, encourage tolerance and foster interaction among protagonists.

Within the United Nations context, post-conflict peacebuilding operations are one of the activities emphasized by the current reform proposal, and they can be broadly classified under the following categories:

- 1) national reconciliation which could include resettling of internally displaced persons, monitoring of human rights, return of refugees, re-integration of former combatants into productive civilian activities, demining, and micro-disarmament, inter alia.

- 2) economic reconstruction, which could include re-building of the economic and social infrastructure, assistance in re-integration into the world economy, direct economic and financial assistance and support for the programmes of

economic development.

3) Assistance in building state institutions with an emphasis on the creation of structures for the administration of justice, respect for the rule of law, for human rights and in the preparation and organization of free and democratic elections.

Electoral assistance has become an important aspect of United Nations activities, especially where elections are the focal point of a comprehensive peace settlement. Namibia, in 1990, was the first instance in which the electoral component of the UN mandate was so extensive. The central objective of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was to create conditions for the holding of free and fair elections for a Constitutional Assembly which would eventually open the way to Namibian independence. The process of supervision and control of the elections involved the registration of eligible voters (including the repatriation of refugees), information campaigns and voter-education programmes, the setting up of polling stations throughout the country, the selection and training of supervisory personnel, security assistance on election days, ballot-counting and the final certification that elections had indeed been free and fair.

The United Nations has now developed a unique experience in the field of elections monitoring and has conducted this type of operations on all continents: in Mozambique and Angola, in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and in Cambodia which was perhaps the most comprehensive operation of this kind. The United Nations has an important part to play as well in the organization and supervision of referendums, such as is presently the case in the Western Sahara.

Many of these activities are not post-conflict specific. However, peacebuilding has come to involve an even broader range of activities than those I

have just enumerated. I believe for instance, that any attempt at developing cooperative prospects between antagonists or reducing their hostile perceptions of each other, is peacebuilding in nature.

Finally, I would like to include as peacebuilding the activities of the international community in terms of disarmament. Indeed, in this post-cold war period, a discrepancy has appeared between considerably reduced needs for military equipment and the existing productive capacity of the industry. Overproduction feeds the illicit traffic of arms, in particular of light conventional weapons, and poses a serious threat to international security. Any activity aimed at curbing or banning altogether the production and sales of such weapons, may be deemed "Peacebuilding". The efforts of the international community to ban antipersonnel landmines which culminated last week in the signature of the Treaty of Ottawa by more than 120 countries, were definitely of the peacebuilding kind.

g) Conflict management

Crisis management entails modulating one's policy and operational responses during a conflict, so as to minimize the damaging effect of the conflict and maximize the prospects for future solutions.

Within the United Nations, this means preventing situations from getting out of control and erupting into open warfare, as well as curtailing conflicts in an orderly way if they do break out. Concrete examples could be found in the action of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) or of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan. In both cases, the UN presence, although prolonged, is effective in preventing the eruption of a full-fledged conflict.

But one of the most important element of conflict management is to make sure that the principles of humanitarian law which are embodied in the Hague and Geneva Conventions are duly observed in conflict situation. These code of conducts on the treatment of military personnel and civilian populations, as well as on the use on certain types of weapons need to be given wider publicity among elected officials and military leaders around the world. Efforts to promote educational campaigns on these matters should be reinforced. The upcoming 100 anniversary of the Hague convention and the 50th anniversary of the Geneva conventions could serve to give higher visibility to international humanitarian law.

Before closing this review of United Nations peace operations, I would like to emphasize again the fact that Human Rights is a fundamental component of any peace operation. United Nations assistance in this matter may include the drafting and implementation of the national action plans for the protection and promotion of human rights; the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions; guidance on how to incorporate international human rights standards into national law and policy; strengthening the administration of justice; or providing human rights training to various professional groups.

III. Good Governance as a prerequisite for successful peace operations

a) Good governance within the United Nations

The issue of good global governance is at the heart of current debates within the United Nations. It was the central theme of the Secretary-General's 1997 Annual Report on the Work of the Organization, and it figures conspicuously in many of his speeches, including during his recent trip to Canada, earlier this month, for the signature of the Treaty banning anti-personnel landmines.

Good governance is closely related to UN peace operations in as much as “economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, respect for human rights are the principal pillars that together build the house of peace and stability”.

Good governance is closely linked as well to the reform process currently underway at the United Nations. It is about transparency, openness, accountability and leadership. The purpose of the reform is precisely to enhance all of these elements and to make the United Nations a better instrument of global services for governments and people.

Reform proposals presented by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, last July, include administrative reforms (which he can undertake under his own authority) and structural reforms which require the negotiated consent of Member States and possible amendments to the Charter. Both set of proposals are guided by good governance considerations.

Administrative reforms aim at bringing greater coherence to the work of the Organization and at strengthening the leadership of the Secretariat. To this end, the Secretary-General has established, last September, a new “Senior Management Group” which now plays a key consultative role. It serves as the Secretary-General’s cabinet and facilitates joint decision-making.

Similarly aimed at strengthening the leadership of the Secretariat, the reform proposals of the Secretary-General provide for the creation within his Office of a small Strategic Planning Unit which is to be in charge of identifying emerging global issues and trends, analyzing their implications for the United Nations, and devising policy recommendations for the Secretary-General and the Senior Management Group. At this stage, the unit has not yet been set up, although preliminary approval

was given by the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

b) Interaction between the UN and other types of peace operations

In recent years, good governance considerations have led to greater interaction and information sharing between the United Nations, which conducts global-type peace operations, and other types of peace operations.

The United Nations has had to deal with peace operations sponsored by transcontinental entities such as NATO. In the former Yugoslavia, it has cooperated with IFOR, and is now cooperating with SFOR, in the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement.

Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations for the purpose of maintaining peace and security was already anticipated in Chapter VIII of the Charter, but the cold war did not allow for this option to materialize fully until the 1990s. It is with the spectacular increase in demand for peace operations that the United Nations came to realize that it could not, by itself, meet all the demands thrust upon it, and that it needed to cooperate with other institutions in order to alleviate its burden. The basic rule governing such cooperation is that the activities of the regional organizations must be consistent with the purposes and the principles of the Charter. According to article 53 of the Charter, enforcement action by regional organizations must even receive a specific authorization of the Security Council.

Therefore, without claiming a UN monopoly over peace operations, it should nevertheless be assumed that the activities of regional organizations are no substitute for UN involvement. The norm should be that the Secretary-General

endeavours to “associate” regional organizations to his own efforts, not that he “hands over” entire problem to them. This does not preclude the Security Council from delegating responsibilities to a regional institution, but only in an emergency, when the Security Council is not in a position to act while other organizations could bring an effective response.

Cooperation with regional organizations can take any number of forms, five of which have been formally identified: consultation, diplomatic support, operational support, codeployment and joint operations.

The United Nations has experienced these various methods of cooperation with different regional groups. In Africa, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Economic Community of West African States have all been associated to United Nations operations. In Central America and the Caribbean, groups of States and the Organization of American States have supported UN action in Nicaragua, El Salvador or Haiti. In Asia, the Association of South East Asian Nations has worked towards a settlement of the Cambodian conflict.

Beyond these instances of cooperation with regional entities, the United Nations has also worked with individual States in the context of peace operations. In the Caucasus for instance, the Security Council has authorized and supported a peace-keeping operation of the CIS.

c) Tripartite cooperation between the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe

I would like to highlight the example provided by the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as it is perhaps the most sophisticated. This institution has formal

institutional ties for cooperation with the United Nations. Both organization work within the context of a "framework for cooperation" which was mutually agreed upon in 1993. That year, the General Assembly granted OSCE observer status. Good contacts have been established and maintained by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman -in-Office of the OSCE, as well as with the Secretary-General of the OSCE who meet regularly.

An informal agreement between the two Organizations has led to a clear division of labour , with the UN retaining the lead in the peacemaking efforts in Tajikistan and Abkhasia (Georgia), while the OSCE has had the lead in the Republic of Moldova, South Ossetia, and in the conflict over Nagorny-Karabakh (Azerbaijani).

Cooperation with Geneva has been active in various fields and intensified in 1997. In January, the seventh round of informal high-level tripartite consultations - UN/OSCE/Council of Europe was held at the Palais des Nations. Issues discussed were the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were also invited to attend. In July, the UNHCR, the OSCE and the IOM organized the first meeting of the Steering Group of the "Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States" . In November, a "target-oriented" meeting on the Caucasus, involving the UN/OSCE and Council of Europe was held in Vienna at the invitation of the OSCE.

Thus the scope of activities in which these three organizations cooperate is particularly vast and efforts to enhance this cooperation are on-going.

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I would like to close the circle of this speech by returning to the subject of human rights which is at the heart of all United Nations policies. This is not an exaggeration meant to fit the priorities of your weekly agenda. It is a fact and I would like to draw your attention to various concurring evidences. The Human Rights Secretariat, which is based in Geneva, has just undergone a major restructuring with the consolidation of two former entities into the present Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. A high profile Commissioner has taken office in September 1997, in the person of the former President of Ireland, Mrs. Mary Robinson. Most importantly, human rights are given a central role in the context of the global reform efforts currently underway. Indeed, the Secretary-General has decided to consolidate all Departments, Programmes and Funds into four Executive Committees representing the core sectors of UN activity: peace and security; humanitarian affairs; economic and social affairs; and development operations. Human rights presents the peculiarity of being the only activity which cuts across all sectoral lines, thereby reflecting the importance the United Nations is granting to this matter. Human rights are the Ariane thread of United Nations policies.

Before yielding the floor, I would like to stress the importance of academic brainstorming exercises, such as the one we have here today, in generating new ideas and fostering interaction between the new various organizations involved in peace promotion. I look forward to hearing your ideas and participating in the upcoming debate. Thank you for your attention!