

Relevance of United Nations in Post Cold War Era

Abstract

Sixty-four years ago the United Nations (UN) was born out of the sufferings caused by the II World War. The purpose of the Organization, as indicated in its Charter, was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It aimed to correct the League of Nations' deficiencies and managed to survive since 1945, twice as long as the League of Nations. The UN Charter makes tall promises to humanity. It seeks to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, establish conditions under which justice and international law could be respected, and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. The world body aims to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations on the basis of equal rights of people, achieve international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problem and become the center for harmonizing the action of all nations, but on the pretext of disarming Iraq off its alleged Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) the USA invaded Iraq, overthrew Saddam Hussein, its erstwhile leader and planted occupation forces to ensure peace in Iraq pending the formation of a new government, arise a question mark on UNO. This research paper will show the relevance of UN in present contemporary world.

Keywords: United Nations, Peace, World, Weapons, Conflict, Organization.

Introduction

United Nations came just after the II World War, for maintain peace and prosperity in the world. The purpose of the Organization, as indicated in its Charter, was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The UN Charter makes tall promises to humanity. It seeks to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, establish conditions under which justice and international law could be respected, and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. The world body aims to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations on the basis of equal rights of people, achieve international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problem and become the center for harmonizing the action of all nations¹.

In conformity with the Charter of the UN, the leadership of the UN in peace and security matters rests on the superpowers. However, emergence of the Cold War and its outcome in terms of bloc politics prevented the UN to perform its primary goal of the maintenance of peace and security. In the hostile environment of the Cold War, the UN could not play its role to implement the Charter provisions in many cases related to international peace and security². Though the Cold War prevented the UN to function satisfactorily in the peace and security matters, it nevertheless successfully pursued its Charter goals in many other areas such as decolonization, protection of human rights, and respect for international law, and promotion of social progress and better living standards for the people. In addition, to remedy the superpower rivalry the UN made some adjustments to cope with the threats to international peace and security.

UN did not emerge as an idea; it came because of necessary. The organization has six principal organs; The General Assembly (GA)(the main deliberative assembly); The Security Council (SC)(for deciding certain resolutions for peace and Security); The Economic and Social Council (for assisting in promoting international economic and social cooperation and development) (ECOSOC); The Secretariat (for providing studies, information and facilities needed by the UN); The International Court of Justice (the primary judicial organ)(ICJ); and The United Nations Trusteeship Council (which is currently inactive).³

But the UNSC is one of the 'principal organs' of the UN. Originally consisted of eleven members, expanded in 1965 to fifteen, of whom five (Britain, China, France, Russia, and United States) are permanent



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members, the rest being elected by the GA for a two-year period. In 1991 Russia was awarded the Soviet seat. The SC exercise primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It can act only with the agreement of the five permanent members who exercise a veto.⁴

But this power has turned into a tool for protecting national interests of permanent members or their strategic allies. This power has been responsible for the silence of the SC on some major international conflicts including the 2003 Iraq War, the 2008 conflict in Georgia, the 2009 massacre of Sri Lankan Tamils and the recent Syrian conflict. Although the issue of Israel-Palestine conflict is on the agenda of the SC, this body has not been successful in condemning the violence and settlement activities through issuing resolutions⁵.

The leaders of the UN had high hopes that it would act to prevent conflicts between nations and make future wars impossible. Those hopes have obviously not fully come to pass. From about 1945 until 1991 the division of the world into hostile camps during the Cold War made agreement on peacekeeping matters extremely difficult. In the post-Cold War, renewed calls arose for the UN to become the agency for achieving world peace and co-operation, as several dozen active military conflicts continued to rage across the globe.

UN is a voluntary association. No one is obliged to join it. The club's members are self-determined and sovereign. The members fully represent themselves. The members do not masquerade as anything other than what they are, and all of these members are formally and solemnly deemed to be equal. By virtue of their voluntary association, members are granted rights and immunities. They are able to behave in ways and achieve things, which it is asserted they otherwise would not be able to do. This liberty, of course, makes membership in this club attractive. Membership has its costs. In addition to the rights and immunities that members are granted, they are assigned some obligations. Perhaps, this restriction is a less attractive feature of membership in the organization. For example, members are expected to cooperate with one another. Above all, they are expected to observe the rules of the game and the rules of the club or the law. The members are called upon to harmonize their actions in order to achieve the common ends of the organization. The common ends of the U.N. include: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war to maintain international peace and security to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom and to defend and guarantee the rights of all human beings.⁶

Statement of Problem

The world had undergone a dramatic change since the birth of the UN. The UN was created to advance human welfare in particular by the avoidance of war through cooperative efforts among sovereign states. It is not a nation; the members of the UN are banded together by its Charter and constitution. It is Magnacarta of peace and security for mankind. Main purpose of the UN is to promote peace, security,

international law, economic development, trade, finance and currency human welfare, information and so on. The end of the cold war has brought about drastic changes in the form of collapse of bipolar system of global level, disintegration of the Soviet Union, and integration of the Europe. In short nearly the entire 1945 world went with the wind. The breakup of the Soviet Union has left the USA in a unique position of global dominance, creating a variety of new problem for the UN, after the cold war the gulf war began with Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. This event, and Iraq's formal annexation of Kuwait only days later, led the SC to adopt a mandate authorizing the use of force by a coalition of member states. Council decisions on Iraq, including measures adopted following the March 1991 end of hostilities to bring about the partial disarmament of Iraq, to encourage protection of Iraqi minorities, and to provide humanitarian assistance to the Kurdish population were important not only in their own right but also because they proved precedential in many respects. The success of the coalition's military campaign against the Baghdad regime, in retrospect appears to have induced an era of euphoria in the SC, an era that could not have arisen during the Cold War.

But on the pretext of disarming Iraq off its alleged Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) the USA invaded Iraq, overthrew Saddam Hussein, its erstwhile leader and planted occupation forces to ensure peace in Iraq pending the formation of a new government. But the exercise has deepened the conflicts between the US led alliance and the Islamic forces in the Middle East rather than abate it. In spite of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime being toppled, the Iraqis have continued to defy the occupation forces and engage them in a series of reprisal guerrilla warfare. Suicide attacks; rampant abductions and killings of non-combatant foreigners as well as soldiers in the coalition forces, high civilian casualties, sporadic bombings in major cities especially in Fallujah, Najaf, Karbala and the activities of the Mahdi Army are indicators that the US-Iraq war is far from ceding. The problematic has generated a global debate and given rise to divergent views on the causal factors of the war. Some hold that George W. Bush, the President of the USA rallied support to attack Iraq basically to complete the unfinished agenda of his father, George Bush (Senior), who started the two-phase US-Iraq war with Operation Desert Storm in 1991. The proponents of this argument strongly believe that George W. Bush has allowed emotionalism to affect his professional and state duty.

Others believe that America, in view of the defiance of the Iraqi leader to subject his state to a UN search for WMD, had justification to invade Iraq. Besides, the second invasion of Iraq, tagged Operation Iraq Freedom (2003), from the perspective of the US-led coalition forces, was informed partly by the need to free Iraqis from the dictatorial rule of Saddam Hussein and to rid the Middle East of gross human rights abuse. Yet, one of the divergent views posits that America invasion of Iraq is one of its series

of hegemonic campaigns. Which power has been responsible for the silence of the UN on some major international conflicts including the Korean conflicts, Kashmir conflicts, Iran conflicts, Hattie conflicts, 2008 conflict in Georgia, the 2009 massacre of Sri Lankan Tamils and the recent Syrian conflict? Although the issue of Israel-Palestine conflict is on the agenda of the SC, this body has not been successful in condemning the violence and settlement activities through issuing resolutions. All these events leave a question mark on the relevance and authority of the UN.

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study is to investigate the following:

1. To analyze the role of major powers in United Nations.
2. To analyze the challenges of the United Nations.
3. To examine the relevance of United Nations in the present scenario.

Hypothesis

The study is conducted to test the following hypothesis:

1. United Nations is not playing an effective role in peacekeeping operations.
2. United Nations Organization has become irrelevant.
3. United Nations is not playing effective role in mitigation of problems.

Review of Literature

Spacious literature exists on UN relevance in the form of books and research articles. Ashok Kumar⁷, Ajit M. Banerjee and Murari R. Sharma⁸, Chanchal Kumar and Sanju Gupta⁹, edited work covers the UN role in the post cold war era and define its relevance in contemporary world scenario. The end of super rivalry and the growing North / south disparity in wealth and access to resources coincides with an alarming increase in violence, poverty and unemployment, homeless, displaced persons and the erosion of environmental stability.

The works by Mahdi Elmandjra¹⁰ Louis B. Shon¹¹, Reinhardt Driste's Chadwick F. Alger¹², U.Thant¹³ Chadwick F. Alger, Gen. M. Lyons and John E. Trent¹⁴ deal with economic sources of the UN. These studies provide the data related with financial status of the UN. M. N. Peterson's¹⁵ book discusses the budgetary position of the UN. Adam Robert and Benedict Kingsbury's¹⁶ edited volume discuss the reform and relevance of system.

There are many articles, which appeared in journals, books, newspapers related with the relevance of UN in post-cold war era. Important among include the studies by writers Emel Osmanca Vusoglu¹⁷, Turkkaya Ataov¹⁸ L. O.Taiwo¹⁹, Dilek Latif²⁰, Hans Kochler²¹, work deals with the origin of the UN. It was formed to promote cooperation, peace, security in world. It was designed to enable the world body to act swiftly decisively to prevent and remove threats to international peace. For maintaining world peace the UN charter envisioned an organization engaged in the entire spectrum of conflict management and resolution, from preventive measures to ad hoc responses to crisis, to the long-

term stabilization of conflict areas. The UN's responses to conflicts are often grouped into the three stages of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. Peacemaking's involves diplomatic efforts to manage or solve the conflicts and peace building strives to stabilize post-conflict situations by creating or strengthening national institutions. Peacekeeping has occupied a somewhat ambiguous place between the diplomats and the democracy.

Their views are that today's institutional framework of UN is based on the realities of the post II World War period, which is required to change according to challenges of 21st century. The cold war has defined and elaborates need of the reforms of the SC, The trusteeship, decision Making methodology and way of intervention in countries on the basis of human rights, weapons of mass distraction and brings transparency.

Ramesh Thakur and Edward Newman²² and Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws²³ discuss about the importance of the UN as well as the universal agencies that form part of the UN system has been central to international relations. These books bring alive the historical, legal, political, and administrative details of the UN's many roles in well over a half Century. Inevitably, the early hopes have wavered, especially when dashed by the bitter realities of international politics and conflicting economic interests. Even so, the vision and early ambitions have never been entirely lost and the UN has continued to refashion its goals and objectives through the ups and downs of subsequent decades. Paul Wilkinson²⁴, Carsten Holbraad²⁵ and Paul Tayer²⁶ a very short introduction, an attempt to elaborate the chronological development of international relation, it includes not only relations between states but also between states and non-state organization such as churches, humanitarian relief organizations and multinational corporations, and between states and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), such as the UN and the European Union (EU). These writers discuss about causes of emerging terrorism or other problems, which are by world today, they also define solution of the problems in the way of the UN.

However, most of these works are not particularly related to the reforms, relevance, challenges of the UN system in the post-cold war era. These works during the post-cold war era are comparatively recent, particularly related to the democratization of the SC and relevance. However, the relevance of these studies cannot be ignored as this work can be important source material for the present research. Hence, present study is an attempt to analyze the relevance of UN in present time, its' peacekeeping operations and its economic, social and moral value and, how UN solve the world conflicts and problem of poverty, hunger, terrorism, unemployment and human rights violation etc.

Research Methodology

The historical and analytical methods are used, while conducting this research. It is mainly based on secondary sources such as books, research articles, journals, newspapers and internet etc. the

primary sources reflected in the form of UN documents, debates, official speeches, statements have been consulted for this research.

Relevance of Study

The present study will be modest attempt to explore the various aspects to the relevance of the UN in post-cold War era. The world is changing in the UN favour, as more people and governments understand of this emerging era: that multilateralism is the only path in our interdependent and globalizing world. The UN advocates values that are the cornerstone of this emerging era: freedom, justice and the peaceful resolution of disputes; better standard of living; equality and tolerance and human rights.

In fact, a world of complex and global challenges is exactly the environment in which the UN should thrive, because these are challenges that no country can resolve on its own. Terrorism and organized crime transcend state borders. Diseases such as AIDS are spreading globally, destroying human lives and disrupting economic activities. Climate change and environmental degradation pose major challenges and not only to present but to future generations also. Inequality and poverty can lead to instability and conflict that can quickly engulf entire regions. The UN is the only Organization that has the world wide membership, the global reach and universal legitimacy needed to successfully address these trends. The UN stage enables political leaders to reach out to one another in ways they may be unwilling or unable to otherwise. The UN's impartiality allows it to negotiate and operate in some of the toughest places in the world. Thus, the study discloses relevance of UN, and it will give some suggestions for the improvement for UN. Although UN has not got success in relating some political problems yet it is working for better rates of child survival, greater environmental protection, improved human rights, fighting terrorism, health, research and continuing work to eliminate poverty, maintain peace in the world, among countless other achievements, are all examples of the UN's success since its establishment.

Conclusion

In nutshell, it is concluded that UN today is more relevant than yesterday, because today's conditions is also critical and world is facing new type of problems such as terrorism, nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, refugee rights, human rights, human security, environment pollution, poverty, AIDS, TB, and so on. These problems can be resolved only with the cooperation of the states in world, and UN is a world organization and it is surviving, yet it is facing some challenges such as terrorism, the legality of UN intervention in countries affairs, monopoly of USA, monopoly of UNSC, religious militant like ISIS, discrimination among nations, unbalance of powers, regional interests, regional organizations, responsibility to protection and so on. UN is doing work for remove these challenges and it should hope that UN is being successful, because UN is the need of time and future of the peaceful world.

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