The founders of the United Nations, in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, envisaged an important role for regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is increasingly apparent that the United Nations cannot address every potential and actual conflict troubling the world. Regional or subregional organizations sometimes have a comparative advantage in taking the lead role in the prevention and settlement of conflicts and to assist the United Nations in containing them.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1 November 1995 from Improving preparedness for conflict prevention and peace-keeping in Africa

Within the context of the United Nations' primary responsibility for matters of international peace and security, providing support for regional and subregional initiatives in Africa is both necessary and desirable. Such support is necessary because the United Nations lacks the capacity, resources and expertise to address all problems that may arise in Africa. It is desirable because wherever possible the international community should strive to complement rather than supplant African efforts to resolve Africa's problems.

Kofi Annan, 13 April 1998 from The causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Peacekeeping in Africa: the growing demand and dwindling United Nations supply

African regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play in the promotion of peace and security on their continent. The United Nations Security Council has relied on them excessively, however, in large part because it has been reluctant to authorize United Nations peacekeeping operations. Although there is merit to strengthening indigenous capabilities, the issue of whether Africans are prepared for the challenge of assuming primary responsibility for responding to conflicts is another matter. What can African states and organizations do to enhance their peacekeeping capabilities? How can the international community better tailor its initiatives to the needs of African actors?

The much-hailed “African renaissance” with the end of apartheid and other promising changes throughout the continent in the mid-1990s has been increasingly called into doubt. Indeed, given Africa’s pervasive social and economic problems, many have questioned whether this optimism was called for in the first place. Recent developments suggest that a greater degree of pessimism is warranted. In 1998, for example, the outbreak of armed conflicts throughout Africa prompted Africa Confidential to label the year an “annus horribilis.” Horrible it may have been, but the situation was to grow even more dire. The extreme barbarity of wars and frequency of coup d’états during the first six months of 1999 have been such that 1998 may be viewed in retrospect as a period of relative calm.

The prospects for African peace and security are disheartening. African states still suffer from the enduring legacy of colonialism. The end of the Cold War has created a power vacuum conducive to the rise and spread of internal violence. African leaders have also contributed to the problems facing their nations. It is proving increasingly difficult for the state to respond to economic, social and security challenges. Some states have “failed” and others are in steep decline. The proliferation of weapons, especially small arms, as well as the migration and displacement of large numbers of people have all contributed to the spread of armed conflict. In several instances, conflicts that started on a national level have spilled over into neighbouring countries or have assumed regional dimensions.

Ironically, at a time when the demand for peacekeepers is growing, the supply of United Nations Blue Helmets has shrunk drastically. In the early 1990s, United Nations peacekeeping expanded exponentially in both size and scope. In addition to serving as a buffer between warring factions, the new operations assumed such diverse responsibilities as disarming combatants, repatriating refugees, instilling a respect for human rights, holding elections and even nation-building. Some of these tasks proved exceedingly difficult and controversial. The missions also became much more costly on both human and financial scales. For mostly political reasons, the accomplishments of United Nations peacekeeping operations were minimized and their shortcomings emphasized.

In the wake of the difficulties experienced by the United Nations in Somalia in 1993, however, the Council has largely abandoned large-scale, multifaceted peace operations, replacing them with smaller and more specialized monitoring missions. The figures provide dramatic evidence of this downsizing. In 1993, more than 75,000 Blue Helmets were deployed in United Nations peacekeeping operations; by mid-1999, that number had been reduced to fewer than 12,000. In Africa, the reduction has been even starker: in 1993, United Nations peacekeeping forces numbered almost 40,000; in June 1999, they had dwindled to less than 1,600. Between 1989 and 1993 the Council authorized ten United Nations peacekeeping operations throughout Africa; over the next five years, only five were established. Whereas there were seven concurrent United Nations peacekeeping operations on the continent in 1993, in June 1999 there were three.

**African efforts to promote peace and security: numerous but limited**

African states have made noticeable strides over the past decade in assuming primary responsibility for promoting peace and security. They have recognized the grave threats to their security and are well aware of the Security Council’s reluctance to become meaningfully involved in conflicts on their continent. Recognized African organizations such as the Organization of African
Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as well as ad hoc coalitions of African states are striving to become more self-reliant in responding to armed conflict and complex humanitarian emergencies in their midst. Towards this end, they have shown a greater willingness to prepare for and undertake diplomatic and military actions.

The OAU has created new institutions and provided for greater financial resources to address armed conflict on the continent. The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, established in 1993, institutionalized an informal structure and gave a smaller body of member states a mandate to make decisions that previously could only be taken by consensus among all fifty-three members. The decision to deploy the OAU Observer Mission in the Comoros, taken at the ambassadorial level of the Central Organ, represents an important achievement. The newly created OAU Peace Fund has succeeded in securing crucial funding for various peace and security initiatives. The OAU Secretariat’s Conflict Management Division is slowly acquiring the skills and equipment necessary to support OAU peacekeeping initiatives.

Members of ECOWAS have played a pivotal peacekeeping role in the subregion through the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Since its creation in 1990, ECOMOG has intervened militarily in three subregional conflicts — first in Liberia, then Sierra Leone, and most recently in Guinea-Bissau. In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOMOG responded when no other body was willing and proved committed to remaining engaged. Although ECOMOG did not achieve its objectives in Guinea-Bissau, it is nevertheless illustrative of the institutional progress that ECOWAS has made. Importantly, the agenda in that mission was not dictated by a single member state. The composition of the force and its adherence to a mandate are significant advances that bode well for ECOMOG’s future. Similarly, ECOWAS member states’ decision to establish the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security confirms their intention to abandon their ad hoc peacekeeping approach.

SADC member states have also exhibited a growing interest in responding to conflicts in their subregion. In 1996, they established a formal framework for addressing peace and security issues known as the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security. Since then they have continued their efforts to resolve the impasse over the Organ’s structure and functioning. Even without a working mechanism for addressing peace and security issues, SADC members have undertaken important peacekeeping training and other capacity-building initiatives. In addition, SADC member states have fielded multinational operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Lesotho.

Several other African subregional groupings have moved towards establishing peace and security frameworks. The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) created an informal body called the Council of Common Defence in 1990. East African Co-operation (EAC) members undertook a successful joint peacekeeping exercise in 1998 and are presently considering a draft treaty to set up the East African Community, which provides a possible basis for joint military operations. In 1999, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) established a mechanism to promote, maintain and consolidate peace and security in their subregion known as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has played a mediation role in Somalia and the Sudan since the early 1990s, and the IGAD Partners Forum has generated financial and international political support for these efforts since its creation in 1997. The Treaty of Non-Aggression, Assistance and Mutual Defence (ANAD) has decided to form a subregional peacekeeping force.

To date, however, these African regional and subregional responses have achieved only limited success. The OAU remains saddled by its legacy of non-intervention. The Mechanism has succeeded, therefore, in ensuring that the OAU deploys peacekeepers in very few instances, and then only on
Peacekeeping: evolution or extinction?

a very modest scale. The financial and operational shortcomings that plagued the OAU peacekeeping initiative in Chad twenty years ago have not been overcome. Conflict prevention — rather than its management or resolution — will continue to represent the area in which consensus has the greatest chance of being attained. Election monitoring missions will continue to be the most prevalent OAU field undertaking. Thus, even if the Conflict Management Division’s Early Warning System were to become operational, it would not likely have a profound effect on the OAU’s operational performance. Timely and appropriate decision-making is — and will remain — a much more pressing problem for the Organization to address than early warning.

Of the African subregional organizations, ECOWAS has made the most progress in fielding a credible peacekeeping force, but each of its interventions has had troubling aspects and implications. ECOMOG exacerbated the civil war in Liberia, and its involvement there contributed to the civil war in Sierra Leone. The force’s limitations in Sierra Leone have also prolonged that conflict. ECOMOG’s inability to deploy a sizeable force in a timely manner in Guinea-Bissau set the stage for the subsequent coup. In addition, a lack of adequate financial and human resources casts doubt upon the organization’s ability to fund and oversee a framework as ambitious as the proposed Mechanism. Beyond these concerns, potential troop contributors might find it less attractive to participate in an ECOMOG force that was subject to strict controls.

Although SADC members have co-operated in peacekeeping training and other capacity-building endeavours, the organization itself has been effectively sidelined in the domain of peace and security due to the non-functioning of the Organ and broader subregional tensions. Until the conflict over the Organ is conclusively resolved, subregional peacekeeping initiatives will be largely divorced from SADC. Moreover, the recent interventions of SADC members in DRC and Lesotho have exacerbated existing subregional tensions and created new ones. The military capabilities of SADC members and the political standing of South Africa on the continent make SADC potentially very significant in the domain of peace and security, but current divisions are forestalling this eventuality.

No other African subregional organization is prepared to undertake large-scale multifaceted peacekeeping operations. UMA’s Council of Common Defence has never convened, and its members have tacitly agreed not to intervene diplomatically, let alone militarily, on divisive “domestic” issues in member states. Although EAC members could conceivably field a peacekeeping operation in the near future, any such initiative would be quite limited in both scope and duration. ECCAS cannot be expected to respond in any meaningful way to crises within and among its members. IGAD’s efforts will remain limited to mediation and negotiation. ANAD’s plans for a standby peacekeeping force are not likely to materialize in view of financial limitations and other subregional peacekeeping developments.

Recognizing that working through a regional or subregional organization is not always feasible or practical, African states have continued to intervene militarily on the continent outside of formal organizations. Like regional and subregional efforts, such interventions highlight the growing political willingness of African countries to undertake peacekeeping operations. The historical examples of the two Moroccan-led forces in Zaire, the Nigerian operation in Chad, and the military involvement of Southern African countries in Mozambique, as well as the more recent examples of the Inter-African Force to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) in the Central African Republic and the proposed mission in Congo (Brazzaville) show that much has and can be achieved outside of African regional and subregional organizations. As MISAB attests, an ad hoc coalition of states can make a positive contribution to regional peace and security by deploying peacekeepers.
Yet these examples of ad hoc initiatives also underscore African limitations in undertaking peacekeeping operations. In order to participate in ad hoc peacekeeping operations, African countries have typically required substantial Western assistance. When the necessary financial and logistical support is provided, African peacekeepers are largely successful. If that assistance is not given, as in the case of Congo (Brazzaville), or is withdrawn, as in the case of MISAB, African countries have not managed to assume such responsibilities themselves.

*African peacekeeping experience and military capabilities explain predicament*

African experience in various United Nations peacekeeping operations and Western-led multinational forces, while vast, underscores the problems they have encountered when undertaking missions on their own. African countries contributing formed units to these missions have tended to provide infantry battalions with modest assets. More often than not, they have deployed with and remained operational as a result of outside assistance. Very few African countries have provided specialized units to such undertakings. Although African countries do not take part in United Nations peacekeeping operations for the monetary benefits — evident from their willingness to deploy troops in numerous non-UN operations — the absence of financial support severely undermines their ability to function effectively.

It follows then that many of the difficulties that African organizations and ad hoc coalitions have encountered when fielding their own forces are related to the military capabilities of participating states. Few African countries are capable of deploying a battalion for a peacekeeping operation or multinational force without significant assistance. In addition, most do not possess specialized units with sufficient equipment or expertise to provide such necessary services as engineering, communications, medical or movement control. African countries whose militaries do possess some of these skills are hard-pressed to make them available for extended periods of time. With few exceptions, African countries cannot project force great distances. The ability to sustain a sizeable force presents a more significant obstacle. Whereas it is possible to utilize civilian assets to assist in the initial transport of troops and some matériel, it is much more difficult to redress shortcomings in command and control, logistics and resupply. It has even proven difficult for African countries to deploy with the desired level of self-sufficiency.

*Western programmes to develop African capacities: a partial answer*

Aware of the problems but nonetheless unwilling to intervene militarily themselves, a number of Western countries have designed programmes to develop African peacekeeping capabilities. The initiatives vary considerably in terms of their levels of financial and political commitment as well as their primary emphases. Nevertheless, most provide training, equipment or financing to African countries, either directly or through African regional organizations.

Among the capacity-building initiatives, American, British and French programmes are the most substantial and well developed. The African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) of the United States provides peacekeeping training and related non-lethal equipment to African countries on a bilateral basis. France conducts subregional peacekeeping training exercises, provides classroom instruction and pre-positions heavy equipment in designated locations in Africa through its Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix (RECAMP). The African Peacekeeping Training Support Programme of the United Kingdom focuses primarily on education and training.
Largely in response to criticisms from African states, Western countries have begun to coordinate their capacity-building programmes. In May 1997, France, the United Kingdom and the United States announced their “P-3 Initiative”, which sought to begin a dialogue with African countries as to how to best promote peace and security on the continent. An added goal was to foster and harmonize donor countries’ assistance in this effort. In December 1997, a meeting was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York to discuss the individual programmes of the P-3 as well as those of other countries and to listen to African concerns. At this meeting, the P-3 Initiative gave way to a larger group of interested states, which has convened on subsequent occasions to share information and co-ordinate activities.

The P-3 Initiative has fulfilled some of its objectives. A number of Western countries have begun to develop programmes to enhance African peacekeeping capabilities and to provide logistical assistance to African peacekeeping contingents. A crucial dialogue has begun between potential donor and recipient countries and organizations. Both African and non-African countries are more aware of what is needed and what is being offered. The greater degree to which this information is being made available has led to increased transparency and co-operation.

However, the desired and necessary “partnership” between Western and African countries has yet to be established. Many African states remain sceptical of Western capacity-building initiatives. The fact that the United Nations Working Group for Enhancing Peacekeeping Training Capacity in Africa had not become operational one year after it was proposed shows Africa’s apprehension. The initial planning meeting in January 1999 reached no agreement on a mandate or terms of reference for the proposed Working Group. Subsequent meetings scheduled for May and June 1999 were postponed. The inability to designate a focal point within the United Nations has complicated matters but does not explain the failure of the Group to convene. Rather, African countries have stalled because they do not want their participation to be misinterpreted as unqualified approval for Western policies.

African countries’ concerns are understandable. The reality underlying many capacity-building initiatives is that Western countries, by and large, are unwilling to become involved militarily in African conflicts. By providing African countries with peacekeeping-related training, instruction and equipment, Western states hope to obviate their need to intervene directly in Africa.

In order to truly make Africans more self-sufficient, the provision of peacekeeping-related equipment and logistical assistance in the field is crucial, yet these are the least developed aspects of current Western initiatives. Supplying the type and amount of military equipment as well as the level of logistical support that might enable African peacekeepers to respond effectively to crises on their continent is neither financially nor politically feasible at this time; providing low-level training and instruction is. France’s RECAMP concept is exceptional among the most sizeable Western capacity-building initiatives in that it includes the pre-positioning of significant peacekeeping-related matériel in various locations on the African continent. The equipment that was placed outside Dakar in conjunction with RECAMP’s February 1998 regional peacekeeping exercise, Guidimakha, has since been used in two peacekeeping missions. By contrast, the United States furnishes only a small amount of non-lethal equipment to ACRI participants and the United Kingdom provides no equipment through its Peacekeeping Training Support Programme. Many other Western capacity-building programmes also focus primarily on providing training to African troops rather than equipment.

When matériel and logistical support are forthcoming, they usually arrive only after the African force has suffered a significant setback. For example, most of the United States support for ECOMOG’s
efforts in Liberia materialized six years into the conflict. The 1999 matching grant of US$ 16 million that the United Kingdom made available to support Sierra Leone and ECOMOG operations was offered after ECOMOG had suffered numerous casualties and had threatened to withdraw.

Although the needs of African countries are well known, bilateral Western capacity-building initiatives respond principally to domestic political concerns, not African limitations. ACRI originated as the African Crisis Response Force to permit the United States to work towards resolving African conflicts without having to commit its own troops. The largest United States Defence Department programs that provide training and education for African recipients are designed primarily for the benefit of American armed forces. RECAMP owes its origins in large part to France’s intention to withdraw many of its troops stationed in Africa and achieve a cost savings while trying to retain its influence. Financial limitations have as much to do with the Peacekeeping Training Support Programme’s emphasis on “training the trainer” as does coherent policy. The desire of Denmark’s Minister for Defence to carve out a high-profile role for himself helps to explain the surprisingly large scope of the Danish programme. Canadian support for the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF) and the Zambakro Peacekeeping Training School in Côte d’Ivoire is in part based on the Quebec issue. Domestic considerations also motivate and constrain other countries actively involved in developing African peacekeeping capabilities.

Similarly, the African capacity-building and military assistance programmes of the multilateral organizations generally reflect the interests and concerns of their members. Reluctant to become actively involved in African conflicts, organizations such as the European Union (EU), the Western European Union (WEU), the Commonwealth and OIF have focused their attentions on conflict prevention. They have made little concrete progress in the way of developing African peacekeeping capabilities. Both the EU and the WEU spoke of fielding a peacekeeping operation of their own or providing logistical support to an African force for Eastern Zaire in late 1996, but those plans were unrealistic given some of their members’ concerns. The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries contemplated deploying a force in Guinea-Bissau, but that proposal was not viable in view of the financial and military limitations of its members.

The implications and origins of Western policies should not detract from their merits. Indeed, current programmes have many positive aspects. Western countries have displayed a renewed (if revised) interest in Africa, and the resources they are channelling into Africa should not be dismissed. The various initiatives also impart valuable practical and theoretical skills to participants. Moreover, Western countries have proven willing to alter their programmes in response to perceived shortcomings and criticisms. Importantly, Western and African states have begun to co-operate between and among themselves on peace and security issues.

**Short- and medium-term approaches needed**

Nevertheless, there remains a significant disparity between Africa’s inabilities and needs, on the one hand, and the West’s abilities and predispositions on the other. African countries largely possess the troops and the will to intervene, but not the means. Western countries, for their part, are still pursuing policies that primarily reflect their own needs and are reluctant to devote the requisite resources with the speed the situation demands, if at all. Western programmes’ current emphasis on capacity-building represent a long-term approach at best. Col. François Dureau, the Chief of Staff of the Military Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General, supports capacity-building programmes’ goals in general but warns...
that too much should not be expected of them in the short term. He stresses that the time-frame for African countries and regional organizations to capably assume responsibility for peacekeeping operations on their continent is not “two, three or five years, but rather twenty, thirty or fifty years.”

Granted, the challenges to African peace and security defy simple solutions. Yet current approaches have been oversold and are at best a partial response. There is much that Western and African countries can do — both unilaterally and collectively — to strengthen African peacekeeping capacities in the short and medium terms.

**ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY AFRICAN STATES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

* African states must place a greater emphasis on staffing their organizations with sufficient personnel to assume new responsibilities.

Subregional organizations are creating mechanisms with inadequate regard for the ability to run them. In the ECOWAS Secretariat, for example, the “Department” of Legal Affairs, which has also been responsible for supporting ECOWAS peace and security initiatives, consists only of a director and a deputy director. Similarly, staff of the OAU’s Conflict Management Division has not grown commensurately with the new demands it has been asked to meet. Fifteen people, including both professional and support staff, are insufficient to run the Conflict Management Centre’s twenty-four hour Situation Room, let alone the entire Division. African organizations must recruit and train adequate qualified personnel to handle the greater demands being placed on their secretariats.

* African states need to concentrate on making incremental progress and resist the temptation to jump from one ambitious plan to another without effect.

African regional and subregional organizations should be more pragmatic about what they can and cannot accomplish in the short and medium terms. Overly ambitious plans divert scarce resources from more realistic projects. For example, ECCAS has created overlapping and ill-defined peace and security structures with insufficient regard for how they will operate and how its Secretariat will service them. Rather than creating new mechanisms, ECCAS members should now concentrate on making existing ones operational. In the short term, efforts to secure funding for joint peacekeeping training exercises or to establish an Early Warning Mechanism should be abandoned; member states should focus instead on developing COPAX and strengthening the ECCAS Secretariat. ECOWAS has also initiated several projects that appear far-fetched in view of present and foreseeable limitations. Its subregional Security and Peace Observation System, which is to comprise four Observation Monitoring Zone field offices, seems well beyond the organization’s current capabilities, as does a standing peacekeeping force. ECOWAS members would be better served to put such plans on hold and first concentrate on developing other aspects of the Mechanism, particularly the proposed Mediation and Security Council and numerous reforms to strengthen the Secretariat.
ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY NON-AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

In the absence of a meaningful dialogue between donor and recipient countries, those providing assistance to develop African peacekeeping capacities should meet among themselves as an interim measure.

If donor countries are better informed about their respective programmes, they are likely to use their limited funds more intelligently rather than reduce their aid. Western countries have successfully teamed up on several occasions to provide peacekeeping training. Both African and Western countries have benefited from this co-operation. The United Kingdom is sponsoring African participants at the French-supported peacekeeping training centre in Zambakro and is also providing British Military Advisory and Training Team instructors for its courses. The United States agreed to cover the costs for several Africans to attend the British-assisted international peace support operation course held at the Ghanaian Armed Forces Command and Staff College in the second half of 1999. Portugal will assist with translations for lusophone participants at seminars sponsored by the African Center for Strategic Studies, as well as with some conference documentation. Because African fears of being further marginalized should not be dismissed, however, Western countries need to be transparent in their collaboration.

Donor countries should provide funding for conflict resolution efforts first and “early warning systems” second.

At present, the greatest challenge in promoting African peace and security is to find a meaningful response to existing conflicts and work to contain them. Broadly speaking, preventive diplomacy is a worthwhile and intelligent policy option. Several programmes billed as “preventive,” however, have been oversold — particularly “early warning systems”. Yet many donor countries and organizations devote significant scarce resources to these initiatives — often at the expense of more pressing and deserving conflict resolution efforts. Providing funding for peacekeeping missions to manage and resolve ongoing conflicts should take priority over providing funding for elaborate and expensive initiatives to collect and analyse data.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS

The Security Council must provide greater oversight and guidance to regional arrangements that intervene militarily in the promotion of peace.

While it may not always be practical or possible for the Security Council to give prior authorization for a regional organization or ad hoc initiative to deploy troops, the Council should require all such undertakings to provide it with timely and relevant information on their activities and the situation on the ground. Reporting requirements should be reasonable and clearly stated.
Regional forces must be better sensitized to the needs and activities of international humanitarian relief organizations that work alongside them.

The Security Council should review its practice of authorizing small military observer missions to serve alongside regional peacekeeping forces.

The deployment of United Nations military observers to complement non-UN peacekeeping forces is more likely to create new tensions than to serve as either a useful check and balance or a confidence-building measure. The regional force feels that it is being unfairly scrutinized. If the United Nations observer mission is critical in its reporting, tensions will increase. Because the small observer mission is sometimes dependent on the larger regional mission for security, there is a tendency to withhold criticism to maintain good relations. When security is not or cannot be provided, United Nations observer missions withdraw — at great financial and political cost. Another problem of this approach is that such small, largely ineffective observer forces provide the Council with a pretext that it is meaningfully engaged in trying to resolve a conflict when it is not.

The Security Council should authorize specialized United Nations contingents to serve within regional peacekeeping forces.

Ask an African regional organization or a coalition of ad hoc states what kinds of United Nations assistance would best support their peacekeeping initiatives, and they are not likely to answer "military observers". Yet that is exactly what the Council offers. Military observers respond to the Council’s concerns, not those of the regional force. What African countries lack are specialized units with sophisticated or expensive matériel, such as aircraft, communication or engineering equipment. A well-equipped and trained signals unit would be an especially welcome addition to African operations, given that such initiatives often lack reliable communication links between headquarters and contingent or sector commands. Similarly, a well-equipped logistics unit would also be helpful in light of the operational shortcomings African operations face. The command structure of the force would potentially be a delicate issue, which should be addressed prior to the force’s deployment. Under such a scenario, the Council would be making a much better investment as formed units cost the United Nations much less than similar numbers of military observers. In addition, the Council would create a more symbiotic relationship between the United Nations and the regional or ad hoc force.

Conclusion

In summary, the recent enthusiasm for deferring to African states and organizations to promote peace and security on their continent is misguided. While former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali accurately asserted that the United Nations “cannot address every potential and actual conflict [emphasis added],” it is important to stress that the Security Council no longer tries to address many potential and actual conflicts. The Council’s reliance on burden-sharing is particularly troubling as concerns Africa, where the demand for peacekeepers is arguably the greatest and the
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indigenous supply faces the most obstacles. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was correct to point out that the United Nations “lacks the capacity, resources and expertise to address all problems that may arise in Africa.” Yet the same might be said — only more so — of its new African “partners”. African organizations and ad hoc undertakings face many of the same challenges as United Nations peacekeeping operations plus numerous additional obstacles. African and Western efforts to develop African peacekeeping capabilities provide a basis upon which to build, but the United Nations Security Council must also reassert itself in peacekeeping on the continent.

Notes

5 Interview with Col. François Dureau, Chief of Staff, Military Adviser’s Office, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 22 June 1999, New York.
6 The following seven recommendations are among more than twenty that are offered in Peacekeeping in Africa: Capabilities and Culpabilities.