Towards a ‘new world order’

Global political, strategic and peacekeeping developments: 1988–91

On 21 August 1990 the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, rose to address Parliament. Less than three weeks earlier Iraq had invaded its small neighbour, Kuwait; on 6 August the United Nations had voted to apply sanctions against Iraq, and four days later Hawke had gravely announced the deployment of three Australian warships. Now, belatedly, and conscious of the responsibility of sending forces overseas to potential conflict, he was justifying his decision in Parliament, and he made the case firmly in the context of the dramatic changes in the international system taking place at that time. He explained that ‘over the past few years the frightening rigidities of the Cold War have dissolved and the threat of global war between the superpowers has receded’. The task therefore was ‘to construct a new world order which will guarantee that the end of the Cold War will bring an era of peace’. He argued that as the Cold War faded the United Nations was moving ‘back to the position its founders intended for it’, and in the future Australia might need to depend on the principles of the United Nations Charter to protect its interests. Australia was ‘not sending ships to the Gulf region to serve our allies; we are going to protect the international rule of law which will be vital to our security however our alliances may develop in the future’.  

The previous November, at the time of the remarkable collapse of the Berlin Wall, the Foreign minister, Senator Gareth Evans, had talked optimistically about ‘a quite fundamental transformation in East–West relations’. By then the changes were clear. The end of the Cold War had first become likely in April 1988 with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and it would be confirmed in December 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The deployment of ships in 1990 brought home in a stark manner the way Australian defence and foreign affairs were being affected by these events. Between 1988 and 1991 there was also to be a complete transformation in

---

1 Ministerial statement, R.J.L. Hawke, Prime Minister, CPD, H of R, 21 August 1990, p. 1128.
2 Reply by Senator Evans to question without notice, CPD, Senate, 21 November 1989, p. 2868.
Australia’s approach to supporting peacekeeping operations. Accordingly, this volume seeks to describe Australia’s role in the peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations that resulted from the end of the Cold War; it covers the missions that began between 1988 and 1990, and follows them through to their end.

At the beginning of 1988 little more than a dozen Australian Defence Force personnel were deployed on multinational peacekeeping operations – all of them as part of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), which had been supervising the various ceasefire arrangements between Israel and its Arab opponents since 1948.3 Also in that year, fewer than two dozen Australian police were serving in the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). There was nothing remarkable about this very limited peacekeeping commitment. Beginning in 1947, Australia had been involved in peacekeeping in fifteen countries, but these had generally been observer missions requiring the deployment of only small numbers of Australian military personnel and, in the case of Cyprus, Australian police.4 The numbers had risen occasionally, when Australia contributed to the UN Emergency Force in the Sinai in the late 1970s, to the Commonwealth Monitoring Force in Southern Rhodesia in 1979–80, and to the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai between 1982 and 1986.5 But for forty years peacekeeping had not figured prominently in Australia’s strategic calculations.

For most of that time Australia’s strategic focus had been elsewhere. Australia had deployed comparatively large forces to Japan (as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force), to the Korean War, to the Malayan Emergency, to Malaysia during Confrontation, and to the Vietnam War.6 After its withdrawal from Vietnam in 1972 it seemed that Australia had resolved never again to send substantial forces overseas for other than purely peacekeeping duties. The long-standing practice of basing of an infantry battalion in Malaysia and then Singapore ended in 1973.7 It is true that Australia had been prepared to send an infantry company to Cyprus in 1974, and to send 300 personnel to Namibia in 1979 (they were not deployed until 1989) for peacekeeping tasks, and did send 150 military observers to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe that year; but, as will be discussed in chapter 2, Australia’s defence policy was one of reluctance to deploy forces beyond Australia. Yet in the period of two and a half years between August 1988 and February 1991 Australia sent almost 2,400 military personnel to peacekeeping and other operations in Iran, Namibia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf and Kuwait.8

3 Australian observers had served in UNTSO since 1956.
4 The fifteen ‘countries’ were Indonesia, Korea, India, Pakistan, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Congo, West New Guinea, Yemen, Cyprus, Southern Rhodesia and Uganda.
5 For a list of peacekeeping missions in which Australia was involved between September 1947 and September 2007 see appendix A.
7 Horner, Duty First, p. 201. The RAAF squadron(s) at Butterworth in Malaysia remained until 1988, and Australia continued to retain use of the base (Horner, Making the Australian Defence Force, pp. 69–70).
8 For detail of the numbers of personnel see the Conclusion of this volume, note 20.
The reason for this surge in international peacekeeping, and Australia’s expanded involvement, can be found in the changes wrought by the end of the Cold War. This chapter is concerned primarily with explaining the developments in the global strategic and political environment during this period, while chapter 2 will discuss the effect on Australia.

**IMPACT OF THE COLD WAR**

For forty-five years following the Second World War the international system was dominated by the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, each supported, willingly or unwillingly, by their allies. Historians differ over the date of the beginning of the Cold War. Some argue that elements of it were already present well before the end of the Second World War. One convenient date is March 1946, when the former British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, spoke about the ‘iron curtain’ that had fallen across Eastern Europe, while the term ‘Cold War’ was already being used publicly in the United States in April 1947. Yet others suggest that it reached its full manifestation only by the time of the Berlin Blockade in 1948.

Ironically, the beginning of the Cold War broadly corresponded with the establishment of the United Nations Organisation, the charter of which was approved by fifty countries in San Francisco in June 1945. The United Nations was the successor to the League of Nations, which had been established after the First World War but had been ineffectual in preventing the Second World War. The drafters of the UN Charter hoped that the organisation would be able to prevent the outbreak of wars around the world by diplomatic pressure and negotiation and, if necessary, that the organisation would take military action against aggressors that might upset the new world order. Such action was covered in chapter VII of the UN Charter, headed ‘Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression’. Article 42 of the chapter referred to ‘action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security’. The action needed the approval of the UN Security Council, where any of the five Permanent Members – the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China (the Republic of China from 1945 to 1971 and then the People’s Republic of China) – could exercise a veto over the council’s resolutions. As most conflicts during the following decades had a Cold War context, one of the Permanent Members generally applied, or threatened to apply, its veto to any UN action to resolve the conflict, and the United Nations was thus denied the power to intervene. The UN intervention in Korea in 1950 was an aberration from this pattern, as the Soviet Union was boycotting the Security Council at the time. It was the last time the Soviet Union did so.

The United States and the Soviet Union did not confront each other on the battlefield, but fought the Cold War by proxy through numerous small wars around the world. Wars of national liberation or insurgencies in such countries as Greece, the Philippines,
China, Vietnam, Malaya, Southern Rhodesia and Aden became Cold War conflicts in which there was little scope for UN intervention. These wars were generally resolved by the victory of one side or the other; but by the mid-1980s there were many other conflicts where no resolution seemed possible. In 1979 the Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan to support a Marxist regime there, and soon found itself bogged down in a campaign against US-armed insurgents. In El Salvador and Guatemala, US-backed governments were fighting against Soviet-backed insurgents, while in neighbouring Nicaragua the reverse was the case. In Mozambique guerrillas supported by South Africa opposed a Marxist government. In Angola the Soviet Union’s staunch ally, Cuba, deployed forces to help the government deal with US-backed rebels. Across the border in South West Africa, South African forces opposed a Soviet-supported liberation organisation. The Soviet Union supported a repressive Marxist regime in Ethiopia fighting against separatists in Ethiopia and against its southern neighbour, Somalia, itself an earlier Soviet client state. In the dispute over Western Sahara the United States supported Morocco while the Soviet Union supported the national liberation movement. In 1978 Vietnam (backed by the Soviet Union) invaded Cambodia, but the West continued to recognise the previous Khmer Rouge regime. There was a clear pattern to these wars, for during the late 1970s and early 1980s the Soviet Union had worked to expand its influence around the world, and this had brought a predictable response from the United States. The Australian strategic analyst Dr Coral Bell summed up the impact of the Cold War on world politics: “The two superpowers were like two “anchor-men” of a vast global tug-of-war. Any government, no matter how shaky, disreputable, and ideologically repellent, had to be seen as a potential recruit for the other side, and therefore if it could be bought, persuaded or coerced, a potential addition to one’s own team.”

Of course, not all wars fitted easily into the Cold War framework. The 1982 Falklands War, for example, was fought by two countries – Britain and Argentina – that were both allies of the United States. Although the United States backed Pakistan and the Soviet Union was allied with India, the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971 were caused by local issues. The Arab/Israeli wars of 1948, 1949, 1967, 1973 and 1982 were even more complex, even though the Arabs had a clear aim of eliminating Israel as a sovereign nation. It is certainly true that the United States supported Israel, and the Soviet Union favoured the Arab states in several wars. But in general, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union wished to see the area as one of superpower competition, and with exceptions they were both content to allow the deployment of UN peacekeepers to the region. Nonetheless, even in wars where neither the Soviet Union nor the United States was involved, there could be barriers to the deployment of UN peacekeepers. For example in the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62), France could apply its veto and thus prevent UN peacekeeping activities, had these been contemplated. As Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, UN Secretary-General from 1982 to 1992, recalled, the Cold War ‘seemed to congeal international relations into a kind of slow-moving glacier that challenged any redirection. The Security Council was largely frozen in its grip.”

13 Pérez de Cuéllar, Pilgrimage for Peace, p. 13.
Towards a ‘new world order’

While the Cold War hindered the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces in many conflicts, it also kept the lid on others. The United States and the Soviet Union could apply pressure to their client states to forestall or limit wars that might have exacerbated Cold War tensions. Further, strong central communist governments in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia prevented the outbreak of ethnic violence between rival nationalist groups in each country. The solidarity of the NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances in Europe brought forty-five years of peace and stability in Europe, albeit with a Soviet blockade of West Berlin that might have led to hostilities and repression in Eastern Europe, whose countries were invaded or threatened by the Soviet Union.

In 1985 the influential and respected International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) concluded, in its annual *Strategic Survey*, that while ‘there were few signs of progress towards solving outstanding East–West problems, there were even fewer regarding peace in troubled regions such as Lebanon, the Gulf, Afghanistan, Kampuchea [Cambodia], Chad, Southern Africa and Central America’. The *Survey* acknowledged that much depended on the attitudes and actions of local parties, but when the superpowers saw ‘their own interests as directly affected, peace [became] even more elusive’.14 The *Strategic Survey* for the following year was equally pessimistic: ‘The past year has seen a multiplicity of regional conflicts and disputes many of which have implications for the global balance, and nearly all of which show signs of continuing for many more years.’15 Yet within a few years, following the rapid end to the Cold War, most of these disputes were on the way to being resolved.

END OF THE COLD WAR

Just as historians disagree about the beginning of the Cold War, it is equally difficult to distinguish one point as marking its end. By the end of 1988 many apparently intractable conflicts were being resolved, leading the IISS to observe that future historians might well conclude that the Cold War ‘ended’ during that year.16 To many members of the general public, however, the most dramatic image was the shattering of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, while others with a more ‘official’ approach regarded the Malta summit between Presidents George H.W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev in the following month, when Bush said that the United States no longer considered the Soviet Union an enemy, to be ‘the symbolic end of the Cold War’.17 A crucial moment was reached in July 1990, when Gorbachev (along with the other former Second World War allies) accepted the reunification of Germany. Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter (1977–81), however, thought that the key occasion was the Conference on Security Cooperation in Europe in Paris on 19 November 1990, when Gorbachev described the reunification of Germany as ‘a major event’. ‘This was’, according to Brzezinski, ‘the functional equivalent of the act of capitulation in the railroad car in Compiègne in 1918 or on the USS *Missouri* in 1945, even though the

16 Ibid, p. 5.
key message was subtly couched in friendship.\textsuperscript{18} Finally, the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 made it unequivocally clear that the war was over.

In retrospect, the end of the Cold War had been approaching since the mid-1980s. By then the Soviet economy was beginning to collapse and could no longer sustain the Soviet defence establishment. Many analysts believe that competing with the United States’ massive defence expenditure and particularly its commitment to the Strategic Defence Initiative – known as Star Wars – placed the Soviet economy under intolerable strain.\textsuperscript{19} Others assert that the inherent weaknesses and corruption of the Soviet system meant that it was going to collapse anyway. As the historian Dana Allin put it: ‘By the 1970s, the Soviet Union had become a vast Potemkin [ie sham] village, not only in the stagnation and rot of its domestic political economy, but also in its ability to maintain its power and influence in the world at large.’\textsuperscript{20} The Australian Soviet analyst Paul Dibb captured this idea in his 1986 book, \textit{The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower}.

The main agent for change was the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who became General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party on 11 March 1985 at the age of 54. Gorbachev believed that he needed to overhaul the Soviet economic system so that it could survive. At home his policies were driven by two ideas, \textit{glasnost}, which called for more openness about the problems of Soviet society, and \textit{perestroika}, which involved the restructuring of society so that it became more efficient and disciplined – for example by reducing alcoholism. Internationally, he worked closely with his Foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, whom he appointed in July 1985. They believed that they needed to halt the arms race and reduce confrontation if they were to have any chance of restructuring Soviet society.

In his early years Gorbachev delivered mixed messages about his foreign policy, and while some Western leaders – Margaret Thatcher of Britain was one – and many commentators were optimistic about his intentions, others, especially US President Ronald Reagan (1981–89) and some of his key advisers, believed that the communist leopard would not change its spots. They reasoned that the United States had to apply even more pressure, especially in the area of numbers of nuclear weapons and their capability, although Reagan’s Secretary of State, George Shultz, thought that an arms deal was possible.

During 1985 and 1986 a series of contradictory events and decisions indicated that the Cold War was still very much alive, but also suggested that progress might be made. On the negative side, the United States supported a guerrilla campaign against the Nicaraguan government (a trade embargo was instituted in May 1985), conducted air strikes against Libya (April 1986) and arrested a Soviet embassy official for spying in the United States (August 1986). The Soviets seized an American journalist in

\textsuperscript{18} Brzezinski, \textit{The Cold War and its aftermath}, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{19} Others argue that the support for the mujahideen in Afghanistan, the decision to deploy new and highly accurate intermediate-range missiles in Europe, and the initiation of a human rights campaign in Eastern Europe, which began during the presidency of Jimmy Carter, were the first steps in turning the tables on the Soviets. For example, see ibid. For the argument that there is some continuity in the policies of the last years of the Carter Administration and those of the Reagan Administration see Westad, \textit{The Global Cold War}, p. 331. Westad also argues (p. 364) that US pressure made it more difficult for the USSR to ‘find a way out of its Third World predicament’; i.e., the high cost of supporting Third World countries.

\textsuperscript{20} Allin, \textit{Cold War Illusions}, p. xi.
retaliation. But there were also positive indicators. Arms reduction talks were renewed. Gorbachev suspended new deployments of nuclear missiles, urging NATO to do the same; he initiated a moratorium on nuclear tests, and accepted the ‘zero option’ for the destruction of Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) systems (missiles with ranges of between 500 and 5,000 kilometres). The summit meetings between Gorbachev and Reagan in Geneva in November 1985 and at Reykjavik in October 1986 were inconclusive, but the latter meeting came close to a spectacular breakthrough, hindered only by disagreement about the US’s Strategic Defence Initiative program. Prospects were even more encouraging the following year. In February 1987 Gorbachev offered to eliminate all INF systems. In April he advocated a ‘common European home’, in which the countries of Europe would live peacefully together despite their different social systems and their membership of opposing military–political blocs. And in December in Washington, he and Reagan signed a treaty to eliminate all INF systems. This was a true disarmament measure, even though it actually reduced the numbers of nuclear warheads controlled by the superpowers by less than 7 per cent.

While this progress towards arms reduction was welcome and eased tensions, it did not of itself resolve the many conflicts around the world. In March 1983 Schultz had advised Reagan that ‘a litmus test of Soviet seriousness in response to our concerns would be whether they are moving seriously toward a real pull-back from one of the positions gained in the 1970s’. In particular the Reagan administration wished to reverse the communist advances in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola and Nicaragua, and had actively supported anti-communist forces in most of those areas. Even before coming to power Gorbachev had been critical of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, but he could not begin a precipitate withdrawal, fearing a reaction from Communist Party hard-liners. Eventually, Gorbachev overcame the hard-liners, and in April 1988 the Soviet Union signed an agreement by which the Red Army would withdraw from Afghanistan within nine months.

For almost twenty years there had been numerous efforts to resolve the conflicts in Angola and Namibia, but they were complicated by the involvement of Cuba and South Africa and the United States’ determination to link Namibian independence to Cuba’s withdrawal from Angola. While the United Nations conducted most of the negotiations, in May 1988 US and Soviet officials agreed on a deal by which the Cubans would leave Angola in return for South Africa’s withdrawal from Namibia. The accords were signed in August. Across the continent, in June 1989 the Soviets announced the withdrawal of their military advisers from Mozambique by the end of 1990.

During the mid-1980s the United States had supported the Contra guerrillas in their campaign against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. When the US Congress cut off all funds for the Contras, the US National Security Adviser, Robert McFarlane, and one of his staff, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, illegally helped raise money from US and foreign donors to maintain funding. The United States also secretly sold arms to Iran, which was then at war with Iraq, to facilitate the release of American hostages in Lebanon; the money raised went to the Contras. When these schemes became known publicly in late 1986, the ensuing scandal threatened the Reagan presidency, giving Reagan greater incentive to find foreign policy successes elsewhere. Starved of funds,
the Contras agreed to a ceasefire in March 1988. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union had cut back its aid to Nicaragua, ending all military assistance during 1989. The scene was set, with UN sponsorship and assistance, for the gradual end to conflicts in Central America in the early 1990s.

In 1979 the United Nations had demanded that Vietnam withdraw from Cambodia. Vietnam had agreed, provided that the Khmer Rouge, the previous brutal rulers of Cambodia, were eliminated as a political force and that its border with China was guaranteed. China would not accept these conditions, but Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia was proving costly and, after withdrawing some troops in 1987, Vietnam announced further withdrawals in May 1988. Meanwhile, the improvement in Sino-Soviet relations – another Gorbachev initiative – gave the Soviets less incentive to maintain their support for Vietnam, and privately the Soviets were urging Vietnam to leave Cambodia. In January 1989 Vietnam announced that it would withdraw all its troops by September. Meanwhile talks were initiated among the various parties aimed at a final settlement in Cambodia.

Another major and long-running conflict – the Iran–Iraq War – came to an end in 1988. During the 1970s the Shah of Iran had been supported by the United States as the regional Western-oriented strongman. By contrast, Iraq, under the dictator Saddam Hussein, signed a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union, and used its enormous oil wealth to purchase arms from the Eastern bloc and from France. The Shah pursued a hard line with Iraq over border disputes and forced Iraq to agree to a new border. In February 1979 the Shah was overthrown, and Islamic revolutionaries seized the US Embassy in Tehran, taking its staff hostage. The United States attempted to free the hostages by military action, but failed in a humiliating manner. The new Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini denounced Saddam Hussein, whose Ba’ath Party had a secular and Arab socialist philosophy, as an ‘enemy of Islam’, and his forces shelled Iraqi positions. Saddam Hussein saw an opportunity to readjust the border, and on 22 September 1980 Iraq invaded Iran.

For both superpowers the war was initially a sideshow. The United States had no sympathy for Iran but did not want to see the Soviet Union benefit from an Iraqi victory. For several years the war ebbed and flowed around the southern Iraqi waterways, with the United States gradually supporting Iraq. Casualties were heavy, and by 1986 both sides were attacking each other’s oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. Then Iran decided to target Iraq’s Gulf allies by laying mines in the Gulf and attacking ships of all countries bound for Kuwait. In March 1987 the Kuwaiti Government sought assistance from both the United States and the Soviet Union, and Kuwaiti ships began operating under American and Soviet flags. Soon US and Western European warships were escorting neutral commercial vessels through the Gulf. With relations between the superpowers improving, the United States and the Soviet Union supported a UN resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire and a return to the 1980 border. In July 1988 Iran and Iraq agreed to the ceasefire. The war might have continued even longer except for the growing cooperation between the superpowers.

The Soviet Union’s willingness to compromise was an indication of a fundamental change in its approach to international affairs. On 7 December 1988 Gorbachev addressed the United Nations in New York and spoke about the ‘emergence of a mutually connected and integrated world’. Further world progress was ‘now possible only through the search for a consensus of all mankind, in movement toward a new world
Towards a ‘new world order’

He denied that the Soviet Union was abandoning its communist ideology, but he referred to a different world where ‘force and the threat of force can no longer be . . . instruments of foreign policy’. He also announced large-scale cuts in Soviet armaments and the withdrawal of some troops from Eastern Europe. The term ‘New World Order’ had been used before, for example by US President Woodrow Wilson after the First World War, and at the establishment of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War. In more recent times, the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the NATO Secretary-General, Manfred Wörner, had also used the term. But it was Gorbachev who gave it prominence, and engendered hope that it might actually eventuate.

The new US President, George H.W. Bush, who took office in January 1989, was slow to embrace fully this latest initiative from Gorbachev. But events soon made it clear that there could be no turning back from the process of liberalisation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In January non-communist parties were legalised in Hungary. In March and April the Soviet Union conducted its first elections for a Soviet Congress of People’s Deputies. Also in April, the Polish Government agreed to recognise the trade union organisation Solidarity and to elect an assembly. For most of the Cold War the communist governments of Eastern Europe had been kept in power by the force or threat of force of the Soviet Army. When in August Poland elected the first non-communist government in Eastern Europe, Gorbachev refused to intervene (as has been the case with the Soviet Union in earlier times). Other countries in Eastern Europe noted this new attitude. In October the Communist Party of Hungary formally disbanded. In November, under immense pressure as East German ‘tourists’ moved through Hungary to the West, the East German Government opened the Berlin Wall. Before the end of the year there was a new government in Bulgaria, the dissident Vaclav Havel had become President of Czechoslovakia, and the Rumanian President, Nicolae Ceauşescu, and his wife had been executed. These events also influenced activists to agitate for liberalism in the People’s Republic of China, leading to the ‘Tiananmen Square massacre’ on 3 June 1989 in which Chinese troops killed several hundred demonstrators.

How did the United States react to these events? As mentioned, initially the Bush Administration moved slowly. Indeed Bush’s Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney, and others argued that the best approach was to wait and see how events in the Soviet Union developed. Finally, on 12 May 1989, after a comprehensive review of US foreign policy, Bush declared: ‘We are approaching the conclusion of a historic post-war struggle between . . . tyranny and . . . freedom.’ The American policy of ‘containment’ had worked but had now ended. American policy would now aim at ‘integration of the Soviet Union into the community of nations’. Discussions with the Soviets quickened, and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) negotiations resumed in June 1989. But even when the Berlin Wall came down, Bush was reluctant to celebrate an event that was greeted with high emotion almost everywhere else. After the summit meeting in Malta between Bush and Gorbachev early in December 1989, a Soviet spokesman

---

24 Quoted in Young and Kent, International Relations Since 1945, p. 588.
25 Isaacs and Downing, Cold War, p. 391.
declared that the Cold War had ended. Later in December US forces mounted a rapid invasion of Panama to overthrow and capture the dictator General Manuel Noriega, whom the Americans accused of drug trafficking, developing links with Cuba's Castro and murdering opponents. There was little reaction from the Soviet Union.

The big issue in the first half of 1990 was the reunification of Germany. When elections in East Germany returned a non-communist government, the West German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, seized the opportunity to press for reunification, despite caution from the United States and Soviet fears of a reunified Germany remaining in NATO. By July, after promises of huge German loans, Gorbachev had substantially accepted the terms of the reunification. In December 1990 Kohl was elected the first chancellor of a reunited Germany.

Meanwhile, deep fissures were appearing within the Soviet Union. During 1988 and 1989 there had been a civil war between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis, and severe rioting in Soviet Central Asia. Dozens of people were killed during a peaceful demonstration in Georgia, more were killed in Azerbaijan, and in February 1990 Tajikistan was placed under emergency law. Also during 1989 Soviet republics began passing laws that were out of step with those of the Soviet Union. On 11 March 1990 Lithuania declared its independence, suspending its declaration three months later only after Soviet troops occupied key buildings and Moscow applied an economic blockade. Estonia and Latvia made similar, if less inflammatory, declarations. In 1987 the Moscow party boss, Boris Yeltsin, had been sacked from the Politburo after he complained about the slow pace of reform. Although he resigned from the Communist Party, he was re-elected to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies in 1989, then in May 1990 was narrowly elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the most important Soviet republic, the Russian Federation (effectively becoming President of Russia). In June he asserted the Russian Federation's right to sovereignty, an action soon copied by other Soviet republics. Gorbachev, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in October 1990, was now struggling to maintain the Soviet Union as a single entity.

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

By mid-1990 it was clear to all that the Cold War was over; but what would be the shape of the post–Cold War world? Would there be a role for NATO? Would the United States try to dominate world affairs? Or would the United Nations play a larger role than in previous decades? And what would be the impact of globalisation of trade and information? These questions were still being pondered when suddenly, and apparently with little warning, on 2 August Iraq invaded its tiny oil-rich neighbour (and recent ally) Kuwait. Here was yet another question: how was the world to react to this clear case of aggression? By seizing Kuwait, Saddam Hussein dominated a large proportion of the world's oil reserves, and he could drive up the price of oil with disastrous implications for the world economy. Further, the attack was a challenge to the United Nations, which in recent years had become more effective in resolving crises around the world. But Iraq was considered to be an ally of the Soviet Union; it was in debt to the Soviet Union and could repay its loans only by exploiting its oil reserves. Would the Soviet Union agree to the United Nations taking action against Iraq? And would China, still reeling from international protests after the Tiananmen Square massacre, exercise its power of veto? The United States was determined to eject Iraq from...
Kuwait, but after its experience in Vietnam, would it possess the resolve actually to go to war again?

On 6 August the UN Security Council initiated economic sanctions against Iraq, while Saudi Arabia asked for US military assistance. Soon US aircraft were arriving in Saudi Arabia, to be joined later by aircraft from Britain, France and other countries. At sea ships from eventually seventeen countries applied the blockade, although the Americans carried much of the early load.

On 9 September Bush and Gorbachev met in Helsinki to discuss Iraq’s invasion, and in a joint statement they declared: ‘We are united in the belief that Iraq’s aggression must not be tolerated. No peaceful international order is possible if larger states can devour their smaller neighbors.’ Two days later Bush stated that the United States had four goals: securing Iraq’s withdrawal from Kuwait; restoring Kuwait’s legitimate government; assuring the security and stability of the Persian Gulf; and protecting American citizens abroad. Seemingly picking up the ideas of Gorbachev’s UN speech of December 1988, he continued:

We stand today at a unique and extraordinary moment. The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective – a new world order – can emerge: a new era – freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony . . .

This is the first assault on the new world that we seek, the first test of our mettle . . .

We’re now in sight of a United Nations that performs as envisioned by its founders.

As it became increasingly clear that Iraq was not going to withdraw, on 29 November the UN Security Council passed a resolution (with China abstaining) that approved ‘all means necessary’ to expel Iraq from Kuwait if it did not withdraw by 15 January. By January the allied coalition had grown to twenty-eight countries.

On 16 January 1991 coalition (mainly US) air attacks began against Iraq (Operation Desert Storm). Next day President Bush addressed the US Congress and returned to the same rhetoric as earlier.

This is an historic moment. We have in the past year made great progress in ending the long era of generations of cold war. We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order, a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations.

---

26 UN Security Council Resolution 661.
27 ‘Full text of a joint statement issued at the end of a one-day superpower summit in Helsinki on 9 September between President Bush and President Gorbachev’, Middle East Economic Digest, vol. 34, no 8, 21 September 1990.
28 Bush, ‘The Persian Gulf: The deficit problem’, pp. 738–41. For a discussion of Bush’s use of the term new world order see Hill, ‘Rhetoric, policy and politics and the United States’, and Hayward, ‘The role of the media’. Hayward points to a ‘curious double entendre’. Bush, he says, could have been referring to a new world order (i.e. the replacement of the rule of the jungle with the rule of law, or even that before this there had been no order). But an alternative reading is that Bush could have been referring to a new world order in the same way as one might say the New World (i.e. American) Symphony (pp. 237–8).
29 UN Security Council Resolution 678.
When we are successful, and we will be, we have a real chance at this new world order, an order in which a credible United Nations can use its peace-keeping role to fulfil the promise and vision of the UN’s founders.30

Less than a fortnight later, with the air war still continuing over Iraq, in his State of the Union address Bush again referred to ‘a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind – peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law’.31 On 24 February the coalition launched land operations to liberate Kuwait, and three days later Saddam Hussein, with his army in retreat, agreed to comply with UN resolutions on Kuwaiti independence. On 6 March President Bush reported to Congress on the successful outcome of the war. While praising those who had led the campaign, he said that he had come to speak about ‘the world after the war’. He saw ‘a new world coming into view . . . A world where the United Nations, freed from the cold war stalemate, is poised to fulfil the historic vision of its founders.’32

While President Bush was talking about a new world order, which could be interpreted in various ways – either as the international community achieving ‘peace, stability, justice and prosperity’, or less optimistically as the international community being able to ‘cope better with challenges to its basic norms’ – the old world of the Cold War was in its death throes.33 Conservative forces in the Soviet Union, with whom Gorbachev sided for a while, made a last-ditch effort to save the Union. Red Army troops moved into Latvia and Lithuania, and thirteen citizens were killed in the Lithuanian capital. In June Yeltsin was elected Russian president by a large popular vote. Meanwhile, abroad the Soviet Union’s remaining allies were disintegrating. The Marxist regime in Ethiopia, no longer in receipt of Soviet aid, collapsed, and the country slipped into anarchy. Eritrea, which had been at war with Ethiopia, secured its independence. Communist rule ceased in Albania. The last Soviet troops withdrew from Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The Warsaw Pact was wound up on 1 July. Yugoslavia, which had not been part of the Soviet bloc, was also falling apart, and the Yugoslav Army attacked Slovenia and Croatia when they declared their independence.

The Americans and Soviets were still working on arms reduction measures, and on 31 July 1991 Gorbachev and Bush signed the START I treaty in Moscow. But on 19 August Gorbachev was ousted by a coup conducted by hard-line members of the Communist Party. Yeltsin acted promptly and, supported by the army, overthrew the plotters and restored Gorbachev to his position. But Yeltsin was now in control. Successively, the Soviet republics declared their independence. In September Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union would be withdrawing 11,000 military personnel from Cuba, and Bush agreed to Gorbachev’s invitation to halt arms supplies to both sides in Afghanistan. On 8 December Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia declared that the Soviet Union ceased to exist and established the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Other former Soviet republics agreed to join, and on 21 December eleven republics formally signed

the CIS treaty. On 25 December Gorbachev resigned as President of the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union formally ceased to exist on 31 December 1991.

**REVIVAL OF UN PEACEKEEPING**

The thawing of the Cold War in the late 1980s had led to the resolution of many world conflicts. But the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia also resulted in the outbreak of ethnic conflict between and within their constituent states. Further, the end of the Cold War lifted the restraints on some states that saw an opportunity to settle old scores with their neighbours. Elsewhere, authoritarian regimes that previously had been supported by one of the superpowers now faced strong internal demands for democratisation, with the attendant conflict as the regime resisted these demands, while the support of their superpower sponsor rapidly vanished. This attitude was summed up by a *New York Times* editorial entitled, ‘Why bankroll Mobutu?’ (referring to Sese Seso Mobutu, who was dictator of Zaire – now the Democratic Republic of the Congo – from 1965 to 1997). The newspaper averred: ‘The end of the Cold War removes any possible justification for this taxpayer subsidy to a repellent dictator.’\(^{34}\) These influences, directly or indirectly attributable to the end of the Cold War, resulted in the rapid expansion in UN peacekeeping operations.

Peacekeeping operations had not been specifically envisaged in the UN Charter of 1945. When a dispute arose between two governments the parties concerned were obligated under chapter VI of the Charter to seek a solution by peaceful means, mainly by negotiation, conciliation, mediation and arbitration. If these peaceful means failed and the dispute escalated into an armed conflict, the provisions of chapter VI came into play. This meant that if the Security Council approved, the United Nations could deploy armed forces to maintain or restore peace. The deployment of peacekeepers to maintain peace between two warring parties once they had agreed on a ceasefire was not specifically covered in the Charter, and seemed to fall somewhere between chapters VI and VII, commonly referred to as chapter VI and a half missions. But so long as the missions had the agreement of the parties concerned they were able to conduct their operations effectively.

There is some dispute about the number of peacekeeping missions undertaken by the United Nations in the forty-three years before 1988. The United Nations claims that there were thirteen missions, mainly of the observer type, but does not include the observer mission in Indonesia that began in 1947 (presumably because it was initiated by the UN Consular Commission rather than directly by the Security Council) or the missions in Korea before and after the Korean War.\(^{35}\) Nonetheless, the most important mission was the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), which was deployed after the hostilities between Israel and its Arab neighbours in 1948. Once UNTSO existed the UN Secretary-General could deploy observers from it to other areas


\(^{35}\) The thirteen missions identified by the United Nations were: UNTSO, UNEF I, UNEF II, UNDOF, UNIFIL, UNOGIL, UNYOM, UNMOGIP, UNIPOM, UNFICYP, UNUC, DOMREP and UNTEA (*The Blue Helmets*). William J. Dutsch, ‘Introduction’, in Dutsch (ed.), *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping*, p. 8, includes UNSCOB but not DOMREP. For the argument concerning Indonesia, and especially Australia’s role in it, see Peter Londey, ‘Inventing peacekeeping’ in Horner, Londey and Bou, *Australian Peacekeeping*. 15
without the express permission of the Security Council. A Security Council resolution was necessary, however, to authorise a new mission. The last peacekeeping mission to be authorised and deployed before 1988 was the UN Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL), which was deployed in March 1978 following Israel’s invasion of Lebanon, and in that case the resolution was passed after only the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia abstained and China failed to participate. Between 1945 and May 1990 the veto was used freely in the Security Council by most permanent members. The Soviet Union exercised it on 114 occasions, the United States sixty-nine times, the United Kingdom thirty times, France eighteen times and China three times. The last Soviet veto was in 1984. Between June 1990 and May 1993 there was not a single use of the veto.\textsuperscript{36}

This volume is concerned with operations that began between 1988 and 1991. In this time the United Nations deployed a further ten peacekeeping missions (strictly defined), and even more were set up in the following years.\textsuperscript{37} As of January 1988, 11,121 military, police and civilian personnel were deployed on UN peacekeeping operations, while the annual budget for peacekeeping was US$230.4 million. Six years later, in December 1994, the numbers of deployed personnel had risen to 77,783, and the annual UN peacekeeping expenditure was US$3.6 billion.\textsuperscript{38} These figures do not include large-scale UN-authorised operations such as the coalitions that conducted the blockade of Iraq, fought the 1991 Gulf War, and deployed forces to Somalia in 1993.

The initial impetus for this acceleration of peacekeeping came in 1986 when the Soviet Union began to pay its peacekeeping dues (the amount set by the United Nations for each country to pay to support peacekeeping operations) and Gorbachev indicated that the Soviet Union would take a more cooperative approach in the Security Council. For some years the United Nations had been trying to end the Iran–Iraq War. Taking advantage of the new mood within the Security Council, in January 1987 the UN Secretary General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, persuaded the council’s five permanent members to take part in discreet consultations about how to end the war. In July 1987 the Security Council approved a resolution outlining a ceasefire plan. Iraq quickly agreed to comply, but it took a year of intense diplomacy before Iran accepted the resolution. The ceasefire came into effect on 20 August 1988. By then advance parties of the UN Iran–Iraq Military Observer Group had arrived in both countries. The force numbered about 400 military personnel, including fifteen from Australia. A total of sixty Australians were deployed during a period of just over two years before the mission ended in February 1991.

Although UNIMOG was the first mission approved by the Security Council as the Cold War began to ease, the first new peacekeeping mission actually to be deployed went to Afghanistan. In April 1988 Pakistan, the Soviet Union and the United States signed an agreement by which the Red Army would withdraw from Afghanistan within nine months. Within days the advance party of the UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) began arriving in Kabul. The Security Council confirmed its agreement in October 1988. The last Soviet troops withdrew in February

\textsuperscript{36} Roberts, The crisis in UN peacekeeping, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{37} The ten new peacekeeping operations were: UNGOMAP, UNIMOG, UNAVEM I, UNTAG, ONUCA, UNAVEM II and III, UNIKOM, MINURSO, ONUSAL and UNAMIC. UN peacekeeping missions require Security Council authorisation and are listed in the UN publication, The Blue Helmets.

\textsuperscript{38} The Blue Helmets, p. 4.
Towards a ‘new world order’

1989, and Ungomap ceased to exist in May 1990. Meanwhile, in January 1989 a UN Mine Clearance Training Team (UNMCTT) had been deployed to Pakistan, and it later operated in Afghanistan. During four years, more than ninety Australians served in UNMCTT. It was not part of Ungomap and has not been regarded as a UN peacekeeping operation, but is included in this volume as an important Australian overseas mission.

In recognition of these efforts, and its work over the previous forty years, but partly also acknowledging that more peacekeeping missions were being planned for Angola, Namibia, Western Sahara, Cambodia and Central America, in September 1988 the Nobel Prize Committee awarded its annual peace prize to the UN peacekeeping forces.39

As mentioned, the thawing of the Cold War also facilitated the resolution of the conflicts in Angola and Namibia. In January 1989 the advance party of the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM I), with about seventy observers, began arriving in Angola to verify the departure of the first Cuban troops. The peacekeeping force in Namibia, the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNITAG), was much larger and began its deployment in March 1989. It withdrew in March 1990. At its maximum, UNITAG numbered almost 8,000 personnel, including about 3,000 civilians, 1,500 police and 4,500 military personnel. Australia deployed two contingents of about 300 military engineers and some electoral observers.

Central America was another area where the end of the Cold War promised the resolution of long-standing conflicts. During 1989 four Central American Foreign ministers invited the UN Secretary-General to prepare a proposal for a UN unarmed observer force to verify the cessation of aid to irregular forces and that the states were not permitting their territories to be used to mount attacks on their neighbours. In November 1989 the UN activated the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), whose mandate was later widened to permit the deployment of armed personnel. The first success came in Nicaragua where a free election resulted in the defeat of the leftist Sandinista government in February 1990. ONUCA had a maximum strength of a little more than a thousand personnel; Australia was not involved. During 1989–90 the UN established two more missions that did not include military members and were not listed as peacekeeping operations.40

The United Nations did not initiate any new peacekeeping operations during 1990, although obviously many of those established in previous years continued. But Iraq's

39 All members of UN peacekeeping missions at that time (10,000 soldiers and police from thirty-five member states) received the Nobel Peace Prize. The UN Secretary-General wrote to all members as follows:

Among the many functions which the United Nations has been requested to carry out, none is more vital than the maintenance of peace as personified by our peace-keeping operations. The dedication and sacrifice of the men and women such as you who have carried out this innovative function over the past 40 years deserves the gratitude of the international community as a whole. It is, therefore, particularly satisfying that the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to you, our peace-keeping forces.

Since it is not possible for all of you to be present at the Award Ceremony this December in Oslo, I should like to take this opportunity to convey to you personally how proud we all are of you and how much we appreciate your dedication to this noble cause. (Copy provided by Brig R.C. Brown, a member of UNIMOG at the time.)

40 These were the UN Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), established in 1989, and the UN Observer Group for the Verification of Elections in Haiti (ONUVEH), established in 1990.
invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 revived the long-dormant concept of coalitions of countries carrying out operations with UN authorisation. Thus under Security Council resolutions passed in August, eventually seventeen nations contributed ships to the Maritime Interception Force (MIF I) that conducted a blockade of Iraq. Similarly, eighteen countries provided elements to the coalition land force that mounted the Desert Storm offensive against Iraq in February 1991.

In April 1991, after the end of the war, the UN Security Council authorised the formation of the UN Iraq–Kuwait Observation Mission (Unikom) to monitor the withdrawal of armed forces from the Iraq–Kuwait border region and to man observation posts along the border. The same Security Council resolution also established the UN Special Commission (Unscm) to oversee the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of all of Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons and its ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres. Another Security Council resolution approved the delivery of humanitarian aid to Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq by a US-led coalition in Operation Provide Comfort. Meanwhile, as Iraq refused to abide by all the Security Council resolutions, the Maritime Interception Force continued its operations. Australia was involved in all these operations except for Unikom.

Throughout this period UN officials had continued their efforts to achieve settlements in other troubled areas. In August 1989 the United Nations had deployed a reconnaissance team to Thailand and Cambodia to plan an observer mission to monitor Vietnam’s withdrawal from Cambodia. The peace talks failed at that time, but in October 1991 the Security Council authorised the UN Advance Mission in Cambodia (Unamic), which in the following year grew to become the UN Transition Authority in Cambodia (Untac) – the largest UN peacekeeping mission to that time. Australia was closely involved in the peace talks and provided troops, including the Untac force commander, as well as police and electoral observers.

Following the UN success in South West Africa the Secretary-General was keen to achieve a similar outcome in Western Sahara. Morocco had occupied this former Spanish territory when Spain had withdrawn in 1975, but was fiercely resisted by the Sahrawi popular front (Polisario), supported by Algeria. In April 1991 the Security Council authorised deployment of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (Minurso) and the advance party, including Australian signals troops, began arriving in September. Further south in Africa hostilities were still continuing in Angola, despite the deployment of the UN observers of Unavem I in 1989. Following further talks a ceasefire was agreed, to come into effect in May 1991, and the UN approved a new mandate for Unavem II with a larger number of observers.

In Central America efforts were continuing to resolve the conflicts that had not been terminated by the deployment of Onuca in 1989. In May 1991 the Security Council authorised the deployment of the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (Onusal) to monitor the agreements between the El Salvador Government and the national liberation front. The conflict did not end until December 1992, and Onusal continued until 1995.

**EVOLUTION OF UN PEACEKEEPING**

The expansion of UN peacekeeping operations raised many questions about their changing nature. Most peacekeeping operations of the Cold War period were described as
‘observer’ missions and had particular characteristics. They were usually conducted with the consent and cooperation of both sides of inter-state conflicts and with general international approval. They were multinational forces that came under the command and control of the United Nations. They did not generally involve the use of coercive force (Congo was an exception), and they were militarily neutral and politically impartial. From the late 1980s, however, these characteristics began to change. Missions now often included police and civilians as well as the military. (Police had previously played a major role only in Cyprus.) Tasks began to include the monitoring of human rights, the dissemination of information, the observation, organisation and conduct of elections, as well as rehabilitation, repatriation and administration. The missions did not always have the support of both parties, and could be imposed by force, such as Unikom on the Iraq–Kuwait border. Sometimes, as with the MIF, Desert Storm (actually a war) and Operation Provide Comfort, operations were conducted by coalitions that had the approval, sometimes tacit, of the UN Security Council, but did not come under UN command or control. The term ‘peacekeeping’ seemed to be inadequate, and a range of new terms appeared, such as ‘peacemaking’, ‘peace enforcement’, ‘peace operations’, ‘peace building’ and ‘second-generation peacekeeping’.

In the spirit of Gorbachev and Bush’s call for a new world order, it seemed that the United Nations might now be able to implement the collective security measures envisaged by the drafters of the UN Charter in 1945. As F.T. Liu, a long-standing UN peacekeeping official, explained: ‘The concept of peacekeeping was developed by the United Nations at the beginning of the Cold War because the increasing mistrust between the two superpowers had made the collective security system enshrined in the UN Charter unworkable.’ The political scientist Ramesh Thakur attributed the failure of collective security to three factors: ‘intrinsic tension in the notion’, the veto clause and the Cold War. Referring to intrinsic tension, he explained that wars between lesser powers could not endanger world peace, and hence there was no imperative on the great powers to intervene, while military measures against the great powers, if they were in conflict, would bring about an even greater calamity. He suggested that the circumstances of the Gulf War ‘allowed the United Nations to approximate the achievement of collective security within a clear chain of command necessary for large-scale military operations’. But he warned that the Gulf War ‘did not herald a sudden feasibility of collective security’. Third World countries in the UN were unlikely to permit the great powers to exercise their powers without UN approval. And collective security did not seem appropriate for civil strife within countries.

In an article in the prestigious journal Foreign Affairs, published soon after the end of the Gulf War, Bruce Russett, Professor of International Relations at Yale University, and James Sutterlin, former Director of the executive office of the UN Secretary-General, advised that the members of the Security Council were unlikely ‘to follow a similar

---

41 Thakur, ‘UN peacekeeping in the new world order’, pp. 7, 8.
42 Boutros-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace, divided these activities into preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. Goulding, Peacemaker, divides peacekeeping into traditional, preventative, multifunctional and complex emergency types.
43 Liu, United Nations Peacekeeping and the Non-Use of Force, p. 11.
44 Thakur, ‘UN peacekeeping in the new world order’, p. 4.
procedure in the future – a future that leaves council members little control over the course of military operations and over the conclusion of hostilities’. The United States might not be ready to act in future circumstances, and other states might not be willing to endorse unilateral actions by the great powers.46

Despite these warnings, at the end of 1991 the international community still remained optimistic that a new world order and era of collective security was in sight. The events of the subsequent years, however, were to prove that that optimism was misplaced. Marrack Goulding, the UN Undersecretary-General responsible for peacekeeping from 1986 to 1993, wrote that the UN successes between 1988 and 1991 ‘bred over-confidence in member states and Secretariat alike. As a result, some unwise decisions were taken, disasters occurred in Angola, Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia, and the United Nations ended a dizzy decade [the 1990s] with its peacekeeping reputation tarnished.’47

One reason for the United Nations’ failure was that it was not organisationally prepared for the acceleration in peacekeeping.48 In January 1988 the United Nations had been managing five long-standing peacekeeping operations, three based in Israel and the surrounding countries, one in Cyprus and one in Kashmir. By December 1991 this number had grown to 11, including two in Central America, and one each in Western Sahara, Cambodia, Angola and Kuwait. This expansion placed a great strain on the United Nations’ capability to deploy and maintain peacekeeping operations.

Since its formation, the key UN peacemaker has been the Secretary-General, who heads the UN Secretariat and presides over the UN bureaucracy. The Peruvian diplomat Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was appointed Secretary-General in 1982 and by the mid-1980s already had much experience in dealing with the major world trouble spots. The Secretary-General could not unilaterally deploy peacekeeping missions but had to obtain authorisation from the Security Council. He was assisted by two undersecretaries-general in the Office of Special Political Affairs. The first of these was a British diplomat, Marrack Goulding, who in 1986 had taken over from another long-serving British official, Brian Urquhart. Goulding was responsible for the existing peacekeeping missions in Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus and Kashmir. The other Undersecretary-General, Diego Cordovez, was an Ecuadorian diplomat who had held his position since 1971; he acted as the Secretary-General’s chief mediator and trouble-shooter. In the parlance of the time, Goulding was responsible for peacekeeping and Cordovez for peacemaking. Thus Cordovez played the principal role in securing the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, while Goulding put together the UNIMOG force at the end of the Iran–Iraq War, once Pérez de Cuéllar had secured the agreement.

During the preceding years the United Nations had developed procedures for managing its peacekeeping operations. As was the case with UNTSO, UNMOGIP and other observer missions, the United Nations appointed a military officer as the peacekeeping force commander who reported to the Undersecretary-General for Special Political

47 Goulding, Peacemonger, p. 18.
48 For a discussion of the success and failures of UN peacekeeping in this period see Hill and Malik, Peacekeeping and the United Nations, chapter 3.
Towards a ‘new world order’

Affairs at UN Headquarters in New York. The troops from the various countries came under the command of the force commander but, while contrary to the agreement covering their deployment, a national commander might report to his own government, which could then deal directly with the Secretary-General. The force commander was generally supported by a military deputy, a senior civilian political officer and a chief administrative officer, who reported separately to the Department of Administration and Management in New York. While the Office for Special Political Affairs (OSPA) was responsible for planning peacekeeping missions and for their operational activities, it was not responsible for their personnel or logistic support, which rested with the Office of Field Operational and External Support Activities (OFOESA) in the Department of Administration and Management. In addition, finance was the responsibility of the Budget Office, also in the Department of Administration and Management. The Undersecretary-General of Administration and Management would not take orders from the OSPA. As Marrack Goulding commented later: ‘Bureaucratic and diplomatic skills were thus needed to win the administrator’s cooperation, especially when procedural corners had to be cut at the beginning of a new operation.’

At the end of 1988 Cordovez resigned to become Foreign minister of Ecuador and he was not replaced. Instead, Pérez de Cuéllar reduced OSPA’s responsibilities to just the management and planning of peacekeeping operations, while peacemaking – i.e. negotiation and mediation – was handled from his own office. Goulding had only a limited staff to fulfil his peacekeeping tasks, including a military adviser, Major General Timothy Dibuama, whose actual title was Military Adviser to the Secretary-General. Dibuama, from Ghana, had first joined the office as a major in 1974, and had become the military adviser in 1981 with the rank of brigadier general. As the number of operations increased the work was well beyond the capacity of the small staff, and early in 1991 Goulding proposed that he be given a deputy at Assistant Secretary-General level and that he assume responsibility for the OFOESA (now called the Field Operations Division). Pérez de Cuéllar declined to act as he was nearing the end of his term. At the beginning of 1992 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, an Egyptian politician, succeeded Pérez de Cuéllar, and later that year he renamed the OSPA the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Goulding continued as its Undersecretary-General, with Kofi Annan of Ghana as his deputy at assistant secretary-general level. Boutros-Ghali also created the Department of Political Affairs to assume responsibility for various functions, including those of peacemaking previously undertaken in the Secretary-General’s own office. These major organisational changes were made after the period covered by this volume, illustrating the fact that Goulding’s OSPA was ill equipped for its expanding tasks between 1988 and 1991.

The new missions during 1988–91 also saw a change in their structure. Some of the new missions had primarily non-military mandates; for example UNTAG in Namibia was required to supervise the withdrawal of South African troops, but its main task was to oversee the election process to create a government for a new independent state. In those circumstances the Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative at undersecretary level to act as chief of the mission. The Special Representative of the

49 Goulding, Peacemonger, p. 30.
Secretary-General (SRSG) reported to New York through the Undersecretary-General for Special Political Affairs. The missions headed by the SRSG then had two components, civilian and military, the latter being headed by a force commander.

Politically, conceptually and organisationally, the United Nations struggled to cope with the changing nature of peacekeeping. Traditionally the United Nations had not interfered in the internal affairs of member countries.50 But as ethnic violence flared in the early 1990s, and in some cases developed into ‘ethnic cleansing’ or genocide, the international community expected the United Nations to act. China for example, with its power of veto in the Security Council, hesitated to endorse interference in internal affairs, since it too faced the prospect of ethnic unrest in such areas as Tibet. And how much coercive action should the United Nations take against countries like Iraq, which bombed its own people with chemical weapons and otherwise flouted Security Council resolutions (given that Israel had also ignored Security Council resolutions)? As the United Nations became more involved in conflicts within states, rather than between states, the nature of peacekeeping needed to change.

In an effort to begin dealing with these issues, on 31 January 1992 the Security Council invited the new Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to prepare an ‘analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient within the framework and provisions of the Charter the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peace-keeping’.51 In response, Boutros-Ghali prepared a report, An Agenda for Peace, in which he set out the different roles of peacekeeping-type operations. He also touched on administrative issues such as the safety of personnel and the financing of operations.

On 1 March 1993 Goulding relinquished his position as Undersecretary-General of Peacekeeping Operations to become Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs. In a valedictory lecture he defined UN peacekeeping as: ‘Field operations established by the United Nations, with the consent of the parties concerned, to help control and resolve conflicts between them, under United Nations command and control, at the expense collectively of the member states, and with military and other personnel and equipment provided voluntarily by them, acting impartially between the parties and using force to the minimum extent necessary.’52 But he noted that over the preceding six years this definition had been stretched, and he now identified at least six different types of peacekeeping: preventive deployment; traditional peacekeeping; support for the implementation of a comprehensive settlement; the protection of the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies; the deployment of a UN force in a country where the institutions of state have largely collapsed; and ceasefire enforcement, which he described as a forceful variant on traditional peacekeeping. He summed up some of the shortcomings in the existing UN arrangements for peacekeeping:

By common consent the departments concerned at United Nations Headquarters in New York need to be strengthened if they are to have the planning, command and

50 The UN Charter, article 2, paragraph 7 states: ‘Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.’
51 Quoted in Boutros-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace, p. 1.
control capability to support operations on the scale currently deployed. Financial and logistic procedures need to be streamlined. There needs to be a working capital fund for peacekeeping and a reserve stock of basic peacekeeping equipment to enable the Secretary-General to respond more quickly when the Security Council decides to establish new peacekeeping operations. Present arrangements by which a few member states commit themselves to have troops on stand-by to serve with the United Nations at specified terms of notice need to be refined and extended to many more countries. The United Nations needs to do more to help member states train their personnel for peacekeeping service and perhaps to undertake more training itself.53

Given the national concerns of the UN member states, these measures were not likely to be introduced quickly.

---

**IMPLICATIONS OF THE ‘NEW WORLD ORDER’**

The years from 1988 to 1991 were a time of great optimism, epitomised by the publication in 1989 of an article entitled ‘The end of history?’ by the American academic and policy adviser Francis Fukuyama.54 He argued that ‘a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism’. Further, he argued that ‘liberal democracy may constitute the “end point of mankind’s ideological evolution” and the “final form of human government,” and as such constituted the “end of history”’.55 Many thought that Fukuyama was wildly optimistic and saw problems ahead. Nonetheless, even those who forecast difficulties believed that the world had changed for ever. Samuel Huntington, who a few years later was to suggest a coming ‘clash of civilisations’, wrote in January 1991 that ‘the world changed in 1990, and so did strategic discourse’.56

Political scientists and strategic theorists hurried to forecast the characteristics of the new world. For example, the Israeli military historian Martin van Creveld, in his 1991 book *The Transformation of War*, argued that the world had seen the end of major conventional war. As he put it: ‘We are standing today, not at the end of history but at a historic turning point . . . If no nuclear holocaust takes place, then conventional war appears to be in its final stages . . . As war between states exits through one side of history’s revolving door, low intensity conflict among different organisations will enter through another.’57 If conventional war was over, then what should be the guiding principles for the structure of defence forces? To some analysts it seemed that the world was moving into a post-nuclear era, even though the reality was that the vast majority of nuclear weapons that had been developed in the Cold War still remained ready for use.

---

54 Fukuyama, ‘The end of history?’.
56 Huntington, ‘America’s changing strategic interests’, p. 3.
At the end of 1991 Lawrence Freedman, Professor of War Studies at King's College, London, predicted that 'despite the mockery and cynicism' to which the slogan new world order 'has been subjected, it seems as if it will last'. On this latter point he was to be proved wrong, partly because the Clinton administration, which came to power in the United States in January 1993, was not comfortable with the old slogan, and partly because the crises of 1992 and beyond did not lend themselves to the solutions that seemed possible the year before. In fact, Freedman had already forecast that the 'new attempts to make stability the central strategic value of the new age are doomed to disappointment'.

Colin Gray, a leading British strategic analyst and historian, was particularly scathing about his fellow theorists. In 1991 he declared that there 'is not, and there is not going to be a New World Order . . . In the Pantheon of noble fallacies, collective security ranks high.' He continued:

A part of the strategic theorist’s responsibility to his society is to challenge the arguments of the purveyors of claims for ‘the end of history’, the arrival of a ‘post-nuclear era’, the obsolescence of major war, the abolition of conventional war, the banishment of force as a practicable instrument of statecraft, and so on. Society has to be protected against its understandable wish to believe that, this time, things will be different – peace truly will last, transnational economics will vanquish old fashioned military concerns, and the like.

The notion of a new world order soon became discredited, but the term conjures up the optimism of the period, and reminds latter-day readers of the extent to which policy-makers and theorists were struggling to make sense of a rapidly changing world. Already by 1991 UN peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations had moved to the centre stage of world affairs, and that trend was to continue during the following decade. But the peacekeeping failures of the early part of the decade were to show that political leaders and their advisers had not fully grasped the dynamics of the new era of conflict. Australia's involvement in peacekeeping and other operations during this period indicates that it too was deeply affected by the end of the Cold War. These operations can be understood only by reference to the changes in global strategy; but, as the next chapter will explain, Australia's defence and foreign policies during this period also need to be placed in the context of developments within Australia, including public expectations and the attitudes of the government ministers at the time.

60 Gray, ‘New directions for strategic studies’, pp. 147, 149–50.