The U.N.'s disappointing record as a peacemaker

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THE U.N.'S DISAPPOINTING RECORD AS A PEACEMAKER

The greatest and most hopeful public event in history!" With those words, a U.S. Congressman from New Jersey hailed the U.N. planning conference in April, 1945. It was a special time. As World War II drew to a close, delegates from 50 nations met in San Francisco to launch the new global organization. Opinion polls revealed that nearly all Americans supported the U.N. A large majority hoped that it would soon become a world legislature empowered to "solve all international problems." Politicians and editorial writers looked forward to a "golden age of freedom, justice, peace, and social well-being."

By 1975, 30 years later, the U.N. had profoundly disappointed many Western observers. Historian Paul Johnson called it "a corrupt and demoralized body... more inclined to promote violence than to suppress it," where "votes could be bought by arms or even by personal bribes to delegates." Authors Abraham Yeselson and Anthony Gaglione concluded that "Nations interested in reaching agreements almost always ignore or avoid the United Nations." Our own U.N. ambassador, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, warned that people all over the world "have already begun to say that the United Nations is a place where lies are told."

That disillusionment was almost inevitable. No organization could have accomplished all the wonderful things that were expected of the U.N. In April, 1945, few Americans foresaw the Cold War between East and West. The U.S., the Soviet Union, Britain, France, and China--the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council--were still allies. It was assumed that these five great powers would work together to police the world.

But East-West tensions quickly heated up. In the Security Council, the superpowers wrangled over the presence of Soviet troops in Iran, and the withdrawal of British and French forces from Syria and Lebanon. Soviet envoy Andrei Gromyko vetoed the admission of non-Communist nations to the U.N., and Western nations voted down applications from Communist countries.

TWO CHINAS

In 1949, a Communist regime took power in China, but it could not join the U.N. The defeated Nationalist government, which had fled to the island of Taiwan, continued to occupy China's U.N. seat. Led by the U.S., the General Assembly repeatedly blocked the admission of mainland China, which denounced the U.N. as a cabal of "imperialist puppets." In the 1970's, however, Sino-American relations grew much more friendly, and China's U.N. membership was turned over to Peking in 1979.

Even when the superpowers were in agreement, the U.N. was often slow to act. In 1947, backed by both the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the General Assembly voted to allow the creation of the state of Israel.

But the following year, when Arab armies invaded the new Jewish nation, the U.N. responded only with...

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so that no bin goes unemptied, no street unswept, and the urban environment is as antiseptic as a Zurich pharmacy. But this technology could also be used to keep every citizen under round-the-clock surveillance. A future Alexa will pretend to take orders. But we are ourselves becoming a resource. Click by click, tap by tap. Just as the carboniferous period created the indescribable wealth – leaf by decaying leaf – of hydrocarbons. Data is the crude oil of the modern economy. And we are now in an environment where. Canadian International Council. The UN Record on Peacekeeping Operations Author(s): Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis Source: International Journal, Vol. 62, No. 3, What Kind of Security? It served as a peacemaker facilitating of milias a peacekeeper monitoring the cantonment and demobilization and transitional civilian forces, supervising tary resettling refugees, and in some cases the as aids; monitoring organizing implepeacebuilder mentation of human rights, national democratic elections, and economic and in a very limited way as peace enforcer when the agreement rehabilitation; ments came unstuck. - effectively war-making. In Boutros-Ghali's lexicon, "peace-enforcing" operations, which extend from lowing missions are.