Blue Helmet Bureaucrats:
UN Peacekeeping Missions and the Formation of the Post-Colonial International Order, 1956-1971

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Abstract

This thesis examines the legacies of colonialism in the history of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations during the period of decolonisation from 1956 (when the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) responded to the Suez Crisis) to 1971 (when UN secretary-general, U Thant, left office). It focuses, in particular, on the first four armed UN missions – UNEF deployed in Egypt, Opération des Nations Unies en Congo (ONUC), United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) in West Papua, and United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Although these operations are often criticised for their colonial underpinnings, we lack a clear understanding of the ways in which colonial actors and ideas influenced peacekeeping on the ground. Drawing on a wide range of archival material, this thesis transcends UN headquarters-centred approaches that currently dominate the historiography of international organisations to access the role of mid-level peacekeeping bureaucrats in shaping the post-colonial international order. In doing so, this thesis traces unexplored continuities between late colonial administrations and the dramatic rise in peacekeeping missions from the late twentieth century onwards.

Adopting a comparative approach, this thesis examines how the UN Secretariat redefined the principles of its involvement during the Suez Crisis and ‘invented’ peacekeeping missions to respond to growing demands emerging from Afro-Asian member-states. Member-states in the Afro-Asian bloc used the UN’s deliberative forums to amplify their criticism of colonial powers and draw attention to specific cases of post-colonial conflict resulting from decolonisation. They demanded that the UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld stabilise these territorial disputes before they engulfed neighbouring states or superpower nations. Seeking to demonstrate reactivity and adaptivity, the UN Secretariat leadership ‘invented’ multilateral peacekeeping missions as the foremost impartial, international, and specialist response to resolve complex political disputes. UN field-based peacekeeping staff, buoyed by technocratic rhetoric and a lack of precedent, used peacekeeping missions to experiment with governance and, later, repair the reputation of the UN following the controversy of the ONUC mission. As the organisation expanded its functions into increasingly complex conflict contexts, the mission leadership struggled to navigate evolving geopolitical interests, regional instability, and its own role in international security.

Peacekeeping practices and staff cast post-colonial sovereignty as simultaneously inviolable and violable, depending on a state’s geopolitical position. UN field-based personnel played an integral role in the uneven distribution of post-colonial sovereign protections, such as non-interventionism, across the member-states of the UN General Assembly. Whilst peacekeepers reinforced the nation-state framework through their mandates and mediation efforts, they also paved the way for international interventions into post-colonial spaces under the guise of technical assistance and peacebuilding. From technicians to politicians, civil servants to mediators, the mid-level UN bureaucrats who managed peacekeeping missions made highly political decisions about the future of the host states’ territorial integrity, diplomatic alignment, and self-determination. The UN officials’ political allegiances, previous career experiences, and racial prejudices influenced their approach to each peacekeeping mandate and, also, shaped their colleagues’ strategies and decision-making in future missions. This thesis illuminates these patterns, continuities, and ruptures in peacekeeping practices during the first four armed missions and highlights the multifaceted functions that mid-level UN bureaucrats performed in the formation of the post-colonial international order.
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Lastly, this thesis is dedicated to my partner, Owen. We survived three years of long-distance, a cycling trip around the world, and a global pandemic. In the immortal words of President Jed Bartlet: “What’s next?”
Note on Names and Terminology

Many of the places mentioned in this thesis have been known by different names at different points in time by different authors. The United Nations peacekeepers used a variety of names to refer to host territories throughout, and following, their period of authority and so relying on their terminologies would not have provided consistency. As a rule, the names used have been chosen to correspond to the period written about – for example, I use Leopoldville, Elizabethville, Jakarta, and Hollandia – unless they have been directly referred to otherwise in the source. These cities have since been renamed Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Djakarta, and Jayapura, respectively. Similarly, I use the same rule for country or territorial names – for example, I use Congo, Rhodesia, Burma, West Papua, the United Arab Republic (UAR), the Republic of Dahomey, and the Republic of Upper Volta for the territories now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, West Papua, Egypt, Benin, and Burkina Faso, respectively.

Note on Translations

All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

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1 Instead of ‘The Congo’ which refers to the river. The independent nation of Congo was renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1997. The ICRC archival documents refer to the region as Congo and Zaïre interchangeably. The nation was referred to as Zaïre from 1971-1997.

2 West Papua has been given many names in its history (Netherlands New Guinea/Nederlands-Nieuw-Guinea and West New Guinea by the Dutch, West Irian/Irian Jaya by the Indonesians). UN staff, during UNTEA, referred to the territory as West New Guinea. This thesis refers to these historical names when necessary but uses the term ‘West Papua’ as it was adopted by the independence activists during UNTEA.

3 From 1958-1961, Egypt (including Sinai and the Gaza strip) and Syria formed a political union known as the UAR. Syria withdrew from this union in 1961, but Egypt remained known as the UAR until 1971.
Introduction

‘The United Nations cannot survive as a static organization’

– John F. Kennedy, President of the United States

On the cool New York evening of 24th October 1956, Dag Hammarskjöld, secretary-general of the United Nations (UN), rehearsed his speech in preparation for the eleventh UN Day celebrations. The UN Public Information Office had organised pamphlets, commemorative stamps, music, and radio presentations to broadcast the UN Day festivities to all member-states’ populations around the globe. At 8.30pm, the New York Philharmonic began its performance on the stage of the General Assembly hall as a preface to Hammarskjöld’s celebratory statement. As was customary in UN Day celebrations, the orchestra would also perform the last movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony to conclude the event. This year, Hammarskjöld chose to comment directly on the spirit of the piece in his speech. He stated:

The faith to which Beethoven wished to give expression in his Ninth Symphony... was the dream of a poet. To translate this dream into action, and thus to give mankind the security it can achieve only through cooperation and the strength it can win only through fusion, is the task of realists.

Hammarskjöld’s positive attitude towards the fruits of cooperation was driven by his recent private talks with Britain, France, and Egypt over the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company. He believed that these meetings had been effective in preventing an escalation in aggression in Egypt and that his involvement had helped shift the parties toward the first part of a two-part solution. However, whilst he enjoyed the classical music and waited patiently for the second phase of inter-state talks to recommence on 29th October, the British, French, and Israeli leaders colluded in a villa in the Parisian suburbs. On UN Day 1956, the three parties secretly signed the Protocol of Sèvres, a document confirming their joint decision to violate the UN

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4 Ibid.
7 This ‘Six Principle’ solution was then accepted by France and Britain in a Security Council resolution on 13th October 1956: UN Doc, S/3671, ‘France and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: joint draft resolution’, Security Council, 13 October 1956.
Charter and invade the Suez region.¹⁹ Within a week of signing the Protocol, on 29th October, the Israeli army breached the Armistice Lines and Egyptian sovereignty, swiftly joined by Anglo-French forces on 31st October.¹⁰ As aerial bombardments attacked Egyptian airfields, the international community demanded that the secretary-general respond to the Suez Crisis and implement a ceasefire to prevent the escalation of violence.¹¹

A decade after its creation, the UN found itself at a crossroads in November 1956 as its leadership struggled to respond to an act of aggression by two founding members. The UN’s reactive capacity was limited to deliberative forums, such as the Security Council and the General Assembly, and rhetorical condemnations. As colonised populations increasingly challenged their imperial administrations in territories across the Global South, these forums proved ill-suited to solve the complicated sovereignty disputes and violent conflicts provoked by decolonisation processes. However, recent transformations to the UN General Assembly strengthened the voices of middle power member-states within UN forums and encouraged functional innovations to the international organisation.¹³ Between 1955 and 1965 almost fifty former

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¹⁹ Under Article 2(4), the UN Charter prohibits the use of force against another member-state.
¹² UN Photo, “UN Day” Poster for 1956, 1st August 1956, Photo #123899.
colonial territories joined the General Assembly as member-states, giving them the majority of votes.\textsuperscript{14} This expansion in member-states intersected with the complicated global allegiances and politics of the Cold War, as the Afro-Asian bloc positioned itself between the two superpowers as the Non-Aligned Movement.\textsuperscript{15} ‘Anti-colonial’ nations, led by Indonesia, India, and Ghana, formed the Afro-Asian bloc at the Bandung Conference in 1955 to concentrate their voting weight in the General Assembly and challenge European imperialism and Western hegemony within the international order.\textsuperscript{16}

Post-independence, many of these post-colonial states appointed authoritarian leaders, ostensibly to protect against future European colonialism and to ensure independence from Western geopolitical hegemony.\textsuperscript{17} These middle power states began to assume their own imperialistic and counter-revolutionary goals, such as annexing neighbouring territories and silencing ethnic minorities, further muddying the politics of the Afro-Asian bloc.\textsuperscript{18} Although many national and transnational groups pursued anti-colonial aims as a way of achieving independence or uniting liberationist movements across the Global South, post-colonial nations with their own imperial aspirations also used ‘anti-colonial’ rhetoric to align themselves with Global South solidarist movement, established at the Bandung conference.\textsuperscript{20} Thus, ‘anti-colonialism’ was diversely used and understood by a variety of community, national, and

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\textsuperscript{17} Although there are many reasons for post-independence states to adopt and maintain authoritarian leaders, including domestic political instability and sectarianism, the predominant justification for post-colonial authoritarianism within international forums was to protect against future colonial extraction and political disempowerment. For more on liberation insurgencies that have devolved into autocracy, see: S. R. Dorman, ‘Post-liberation Politics in Africa: examining the political legacy of struggle’, \textit{Third World Quarterly}, Vol. 27:6 (2006), p. 1085.
international actors, including European colonising powers, during the ‘long moment’ of decolonisation. Whilst seeking imperial expansion across neighbouring territories, many post-colonial nations organised ‘anti-colonial’ conferences, transnational diplomatic meetings, and political strategies to challenge European hegemony, developing a formal ‘anti-colonialism’ position within the international community. Post-colonial nations controlled the ‘anti-colonial’ position in the General Assembly and many used this position to exempt their own expansionist foreign policy from accusations of imperialism; they argued any attempts to absorb other territories was both distinct and as a result of their experiences of European imperialism. They contextualised their activities as part of a process of restoring the pre-colonial borders and ethnic hierarchies and was thus a natural part of their process of decolonisation. Indeed, post-colonial states searched through (pre-) colonial-era cartography to support their territorial claims and legitimise their annexations. Therefore, the nature of territorial conquest shifted post-1945 as states focused on seizing smaller areas, with reduced risks of defence or international condemnation, rather than colonising entire states. As Brad Simpson has argued, ‘Many of the countries that deployed self-determination claims with the greatest fervour after 1945, such as India, Indonesia, and Algeria, denied them even more fiercely when made by restive ethnic and regional minorities within their borders’. Through this territorial ‘scramble’, many middle power nations projected their own, or other Afro-Asian bloc states’, imperialist claims as the practical implementation of ‘anti-colonial’ foreign policy; their expansionism built on the belief that their colonial experience, geographic proximity, or similar climate qualified them to ‘save’ colonised states or territories from European domination and justified annexation.

Whilst post-colonial states radically transformed the international order and destabilised the Global South, the UN Secretariat leadership questioned what the organisation’s role would be and how it could operate and demonstrate value in this volatile geopolitical context. The UN Secretariat had assumed a front-line role in the construction of the new international order as

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22 Due to these complications and tensions, this thesis defines ‘anti-colonialism’ or ‘anti-colonialist’ as the use of targeted rhetoric or protests against an imperialist actor or broader imperialist political agenda rather than as a determination of their politics.
arbiter of international law and security following the Second World War.27 Allied forces developed the inter-governmental organisation as they reflected on the need for a new global governance body following the demise of the League of Nations in 1939.28 The UN provided a locus for national and international decision-making by hosting, legalising, and implementing new international norms from 24th October 1945.29 As the number of member-states increased throughout the 1950s, the organisation’s utility shifted once more, from a creation of victors’ justice to a space for Cold War aggression and colonial accountability.30 The increase in decolonising and/or post-colonial conflicts in the 1950s and 1960s also presented opportunities for reinventing the mission and mandates of the UN.31 Member-states’ anxieties over the unprecedented legal and diplomatic processes of decolonisation, and the lack of international recourse with which to thwart permanent members’ aggression, as in Suez, emboldened Hammarskjöld to construct the first armed peacekeeping mission. Through this functional expansion, the UN peacekeeping bureaucracy emerged as not only a reactive military actor, but also a successful conduit for the perpetuation of colonial practices within decolonising contexts. It also revealed the changing significance of the military as a peacebuilding, diplomatic force during the 1950s and 1960s. By analysing high-level officials, defined as the UN Secretariat inner circle, and mid-level UN staff, defined as mission leadership and civil servants, together, this thesis teases out the influence of peacekeeping personnel in shaping structures of post-colonial sovereignty and reinforcing imperial norms as a means of stabilisation. It examines field-based UN activities and decision-making in conjunction with the broader geopolitical and UN Secretariat contexts to understand how decision-making and political power shifted within the organisation bureaucracy, from mission to mission.

By unearthing how UN peacekeepers perpetuated and recoded colonial structures, prejudices, and hierarchies in their mission activities, this thesis also transforms historical understandings of liberal internationalism during the mid-twentieth century. The invention of peacekeeping in 1956 was liberal internationalists’ most substantial experiment since the

construction of the UN. Liberal internationalism was a transnational vision that considered ‘the state’ as the central unit of world politics. Globalist thinkers in the 1940s and 1950s traditionally understood postwar liberal internationalism as part of a shift away from the nation-state sovereignty framework; the erosion of Westphalian sovereignty facilitating the shift towards the implementation of collective security and a global morality. However, liberal peace relied upon the construction of stable democratic units and so the UN’s procedures, organs, and functions for international peace and security were dedicated to protecting the nation-state paradigm. The UN Charter enshrined liberal internationalism as the political norm within the organisation in 1945 as part of the organisation’s purpose as an instrument of conflict prevention and democratic hegemony. Liberal internationalist ideals were fundamental to Secretariat peacebuilding strategies but implementation of this ideology had been restricted by the organisation’s limited functions until 1956.

Rather than being an ideology limited to diplomatic exchange within UN headquarters, state departments, and embassies across the Global North, the liberal internationalist vision was put into practice through UN peacekeeping missions. Building on Ralph Wilde’s call for scholars to avoid axiomatic assumptions of international interventions’ imperialist character, this thesis has revealed how a specific liberal internationalist imaginary for ensuring the stability of post-colonial nations was fostered by the UN peacekeeping bureaucracy, particularly within mission circles on the ground. This vision encouraged and entitled mid-level UN staff to use their authority within host states to interfere in the political direction of the territory, perpetuate relationships with ex-colonial powers, and silence restive populations as practical experiments in the interests of liberal peacebuilding. Thus, liberal internationalism manifested on the ground through peacekeeping missions as a form of multilateral imperialism, with international UN staff making decisions that prioritised their control of law and order and restoring ‘peace’ over the rights of host populations.

UN peacekeeping missions provided liberal internationalists a legitimate instrument to police the internal affairs of vulnerable states and intervene in territorial disputes without

invalidating sovereignty protections for powerful nations. UN staff imposed, or attempted to impose, democracy onto decolonising and post-colonial territories in order to control their trajectory towards liberal peace, believing that democratic states would be less likely to engage in armed inter-state conflict. Thus, there was unequal respect for sovereignty at the heart of the liberal internationalist project. This unevenness was driven by the geopolitical position of a state within the international order, differentiating state access to sovereignty. The UN Secretariat’s respect for sovereignty was, therefore, underpinned by colonial models of civilisation and geopolitical inequality; a state’s right to nonintervention was determined by its perceived geopolitical position until it reached a certain ‘standard’ of liberal politics. As Adom Getachew has argued, ‘The protections that guarantees of sovereign equality and nonintervention afforded were unevenly distributed, making new and weak postcolonial states vulnerable to arbitrary interventions and encroachments at the hands of larger, more powerful states as well as private actors’. UN peacekeeping practices during decolonisation ensured that liberal internationalism shaped the post-colonial international order; sovereignty became, simultaneously, inviolable and violable (through multilateral intervention) depending on a state’s geopolitical position. From the field, mid-level peacekeeping staff set the standards for ‘acceptable’ or ‘credible’ nationalist movements or leadership and paternalistically assumed a gatekeeping role of policing the ideological future of decolonising populations. The peacekeeping leadership accepted that domestic human rights violations, such as in West Papua, were protected by a states’ right to non-intervention, whilst UN staff repeatedly intervened in the internal affairs of weak or vulnerable post-colonial states, such as in Congo, to control the political future of the nation, against the wishes of the elected leader. This thesis explores how UN peacekeepers were instrumental in implementing unequal respect for sovereignty within the post-colonial international order and how UN mid-level staff sought to, counterintuitively, construct democratic units through political violation and interference.

It was the specific context of decolonisation that catalysed the demand for international recourse in complex territorial and border disputes. These disputes afforded the UN with not only an exceptional military and political role for a non-governmental actor but also a steady supply of work in protecting international peace and security. As Michael Harbottle (UN Chief

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38 For instance, for UN staff, secessionism threatened the unity and stability of a member-state (despite the protections of self-determination in the UN Charter) whereas annexation benefitted a member-state and, in the case of West Papua, resolved a potentially explosive territorial dispute, thus, reinforcing traditional notions of ‘statehood’. 
of Staff in Cyprus) recalled from a meeting with Dr Ralph Bunche, (special representative to the
secretary general):

I remember Dr Ralph Bunche… turning to me at dinner during a visit he
made to [Cyprus] in July 1966 and saying jokingly “You know, Brigadier, if it
had not been for your country [Britain], I should have been out of a job
eighteen years ago.” A joke maybe, but when one looks at the varied
operations and missions that the United Nations have undertaken, and the
part that Bunche has taken in them, in so many of the former colonies and
mandated territories once administered by the United Kingdom, his words
were far from being mere frivolous comment.39

Bunche in particular became integral to the organisation’s response to the surge in
decolonisation conflicts from 1956-1971 as one of the key figures in the UN Secretariat inner
circle. Bunche was an academic, international civil servant, and prominent African-American
activist and had a long career in teaching political science in the US before he took part in the
development of the UN in 1944.40 He became head of the UN Trusteeship Division in 1946 and
pursued a policy of tutelage towards colonised nations; believing that, although the colonial state
was an exploitative and extractive administration, imperialist governments could be transformed
into instruments for the modernisation and advancement of colonised populations that were
deemed not yet ready for self-governance or independence.41 This perspective on colonisation
and his role as the architect UN trusteeships influenced his approach to peacekeeping and post-
colonial territorial disputes; (ex)imperial administrations could, and indeed should, be used in the
tutelage of (post)colonial populations in their process of ‘becoming’ a ‘civilised’ nation.42 His
appointment as under-secretary-general for special political affairs in 1957 gave him lead
responsibility for UN peacekeeping missions and international security, directing the organisation
on issues of decolonisation and human rights from the New York UN headquarters. As part of
this role, he regularly made visits to the field to inspect peacekeeping operations and discuss the
political context with the mid-level staff on the ground, providing advice on mediation and
conflict resolution based on his experiences in the Middle East. He also worked closely with UN
secretaries-general, Hammarskjöld and U Thant, providing a point of continuity between their
periods in office. This intermediary position between the UN Secretariat and the mid-level
peacekeeping bureaucrats shaped inter-organisational decision-making arrangements and
facilitated the devolution of authority from the New York offices to those on the ground.

International staff shaped the design of post-colonial states under the guise of conflict response, technical assistance, and diplomatic expertise during UN missions. UN leadership presented the UN as an impartial, non-aligned, and development-specialised organisation, with experience reconstructing Europe and also responsible for the Armistice Agreements in 1949. These principles and credentials encouraged both Global South and colonial actors to appeal for UN-led peacekeeping missions to resolve post-colonial conflicts. However, UN international staff – civilian and military – deployed to conflict contexts were not impartial actors, as advertised by the leadership; their previous career experiences and anxiety over threats to the UN manifested in self-interested practices. Indeed, the UN staff perceived the peacebuilding mandates guiding the 1950s and 1960s missions as encouragement for their statebuilding ambitions and political interference.

The period of UN functional expansion and peacekeeping innovation from 1956-1971 ended as central figures of the original Secretariat inner circle became ill and died. Ralph Bunche and his Secretariat colleague, José Rolz-Bennett passed away in December 1971 and December 1972 respectively. Additionally, Thant refused to stand for re-election as secretary-general for a third term and ended his era of premiership in December 1971. Reporting Thant’s resignation, The New York Times commented that, ‘It is no fault of his that he leaves the world organization in worse shape than he found it, close to bankruptcy—fiscal, political and moral’, indicating that he retained his personal reputation even if the organisation’s standing remained precarious. Although scholars have examined the early peacekeeping missions individually, this is the first history to trace the patterns, developments, and adaptations of UN staff and operations in a comparative way, as the bureaucrats weathered the ‘poisoned international atmosphere of the sixties’.

Four countries invited armed UN peacekeeping missions into their territory during this period of geopolitical turmoil and organisational experimentation from 1956-1971. These missions serve as vital case studies for understanding how particular operations fundamentally

46 Norrie Macqueen has provided a vital political science narrative of past peacekeeping missions but does not use archival sources and relies heavily on secondary material, much of it published by the UN itself: N. Macqueen, Peacekeeping and the International System (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006). Similarly, Neil Briscoe has written a Britain-focused examination of UN peacekeeping missions from 1948-1967 which provides a useful narrative of British interests and involvement in UN missions during the Cold War: N. Briscoe, Britain and UN Peacekeeping 1948–67 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
and continually remade international cultures of peacekeeping and humanitarianism, as well as reworking doctrines of (neo-)imperial power and sovereignty after the war. The Suez Crisis led to the construction of the first armed peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), which arrived in Egypt in November 1956. Three years into UNEF’s operations, the Congo Crisis erupted and the Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC) began in July 1960. The UN secretary-general negotiated the first UN territorial administration, United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA), and deployed a peacekeeping mission to West Papua in October 1962. Lastly, just as the ONUC mission was winding down, the UN Security Council authorised the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) on the island of Cyprus in March 1964.48

The nature of mission deployment empowered mid-level staff, authorising them to take decisions on the ground that would otherwise be outside their purview. Increasingly diplomatic scholars appreciate the pivotal roles played by international staff and organisations in the construction of the post-colonial world order. This flourishing field of UN historiography is a result of, what Ezra Manela recently termed, the ‘turn away from methodological nationalism’ in ‘new international history’.49 As part of this ‘transnational turn’, increasing numbers of historians have studied international organisations as a source of insight into processes of globalisation, cultural circulation, and economic development during the twentieth century.50 As Glenda Sluga and Sunil Amrith argue, ‘the UN and its various international organizations offer a seductive and under-utilized focus for seeking out and resuscitating forms of experience and thinking that transcend the assumption that the political borders of nations determine the nature of experiences’.51 By expanding beyond the nation-state lens, the influence of international organisations is visible not only in transnational forums but also in the delivery of aid, expertise, and governance in the field.

Historical attention to the UN has largely focused on examining the personalities and events involved in the origins of the organisation as the victorious allies formalised their vision, international norms emerged, and lawyers and diplomats drafted foundational declarations.52

48 Historiographical and historical context for each of these case studies is provided at the beginning of each chapter.
However, there has recently been an uptick in scholars examining the UN for its central role in decolonisation’s geopolitical, cultural, and conceptual transformations. There are two main approaches to the history of the UN during decolonisation. The first focuses on the UN’s role as a diplomatic forum; a setting for member-state instrumentalisation. The forum provided space for the construction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was the first international human rights treaty.


53 N. Eggers, J. L. Pearson, and A. Almada e Santos (eds), The United Nations and Decolonization (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

for the amplification of anti-colonial voices, such as those of the Afro-Asian bloc, through UN organs. For instance, Jan Eckel has explored the General Assembly’s Third Committee, which hosted key debates on human rights legislation and the protection of colonised or subjugated populations.55 These works argue the General Assembly, and its supplementary committees, were crucial, if ambiguous, incubatory spaces for international human rights and anti-colonial discourses. By examining different factions within the General Assembly, these scholars have drawn attention to the organisation as a principle stage for diplomatic inter-state interaction during the twentieth century and emphasised the organisation’s human rights credentials. Works by Matthew Connelly, Alanna O’Malley, Jessica Lynne Pearson, and Gerard McCann have emphasised the tensions and conflicts within Afro-Asian initiatives as UN representatives navigated the diplomatic and ideological allegiances in the Assembly.56 However, these works tend to focus on the General Assembly or other UN headquarters forums, such as the UN Trusteeship Council,57 and state-actors’ activities within these international spaces, concentrating on shifts to foreign policy and the high-diplomatic level during decolonisation.

This thesis takes a different tack, in line with a second body of literature, which focuses on the field and operational practices of assistance during the processes of decolonisation.58 This strand of historiography emphasises the individual decision-making of UN staff, such as international civil servants, on shaping international development discourse and state-building during decolonisation. Scholars such as Daniel Maul, Eva-Maria Muschik, Guy Fiti Sinclair, and


David Webster, have investigated the activities, motivations, and personalities of UN diplomats and field-based officials outside of the UN headquarters. Their works forge a more complicated understanding of how international staff shaped post-colonial nationalism from the field in often unexpected ways, such as through international development projects, as well as speaking to bureaucratic trends and hiring politics within UN specialist agencies. By tracing neglected or obscured sources of power within UN operations and revealing who directed the technical and operational policies of the organisation, this thesis similarly draws attention to the conflicting practices within the organisation’s bureaucracy as mid-level staff attempted to assert and protect the UN’s position in the international community.

This thesis also intervenes in literature on the adaptations and fluidity of state sovereignty throughout the twentieth century. Recent scholarship has started to draw attention to the roles of international organisations in state-building and gatekeeping access to international society. Works on the League of Nations have illustrated the multiple methods that the League used to legitimise the ‘statehood’ of territories through their membership of the organisation during the interwar period. As peace settlements from the conclusion of the First World War constructed different territorial borders, reconfigured administrations sought legitimisation and entry into the ‘global community’. Megan Donaldson has argued that the admission of ‘fringe’ nations, such as Ethiopia, indicated a tentative shift in international standards of statehood towards governmental stability rather than traditional European standards of ‘civility’. However, Susan

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Pedersen has shown how the League’s eventual acceptance of Iraq’s exit from British tutelage, and achievement of ‘independence’ in 1932, was far from an anti-colonial victory and, indeed, marked the beginning of an increase of ‘client states’ within international society. Thus, League scholars have demonstrated that, although the standards of acceptance were shifting, colonial powers remained adept at manipulating the international structures for their own interests.

Similar to Donaldson’s work on the League, Lydia Walker has highlighted the activism of those ‘left behind’ and denied entry to forums of international governance during the 1960s. Walker’s article on ‘periphery’ states in Nagaland in Northeast India, and Namibia, in Southern Africa, has demonstrated the restrictive role of UN nation-state definitions and protections during decolonisation. Recent works by Elisabeth Leake, Neera Chandroke, and Julia MacArthur have similarly shown how peripheral populations’ visions of territorial sovereignty became increasingly problematic for the UN leadership during the 1950s and 1960s, especially in cases of border disputes or secession. From a theoretical perspective, Paul Musgrave and Daniel Nexon have explored the tensions between liberal practices and colonialism. They have argued that ‘liberal values uphold the inviolability of sovereign politics that are themselves imperial in character… international institutions, often regarded as innately liberal, can themselves act in ways not dissimilar to empires’. Building on this literature, this thesis reveals ways in which UN peacekeeping governance practices served to perpetuate and enforce hierarchies of (neo) colonialism, such as racism, Global North exceptionalism, and international development.

Peacekeeping missions in disputed territories became crucial conduits for the maintenance of traditional doctrines of nation-state sovereignty whilst simultaneously interfering in the internal affairs of host states. Paradoxically, UN staff reinforced the inviolability of state sovereignty whilst also legitimising interventionism through multilateral peacekeeping missions. By patrolling disputed areas, mid-level peacekeepers were on the frontline of renegotiating post-

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69 The search for a balance between the protections of sovereignty and the necessity for humanitarian intervention remains at the forefront of international law scholars’ and practitioners’ work on the Responsibility to Protect. These UN peacekeeping missions provided an early attempt to create a multilateral function that could react to such contexts with the consent of the host state, thus, supposedly retaining the host nation’s sovereign integrity.
colonial sovereignty as they militarily validated the delineation of a border and/or the territory of a state; they policed informal, disputed, or dynamic spaces to make them categorizable for the nation-state framework of the international community. Missions’ civilian administrations similarly cemented colonial categorisations and hierarchies in post-colonial governance structures, through international staffing, racialised rhetoric, and development advice. Despite important contextual differences, this dynamic becomes apparent in each mission under investigation here. UN mid-level officials dismissed secessionist or nationalist activists whose interests conflicted with the organisation’s mandate. This was a pervasive pattern: in Congo, Hammarskjöld and Štúre Linnér encouraged active steps to obstruct Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and his supporters’ freedom of movement in order to limit his political power; in West Papua, UNTAEO administrator’s reports and Public Information campaigns silenced anti-Indonesian Papuan activists, and in Cyprus, the UN leadership prioritised negotiations with Greece and Turkey rather than with Cypriot politicians, encouraging political stagnation on the island. Thus, local populations were excluded from decision-making processes by the organisation that their government had invited to help, due to the organisation’s self-interested diplomatic practices and racialised prejudices.

Articulating the racialised prejudices at the heart of UN peacekeeping bureaucracies requires a critical approach to the racist underpinnings of international relations and, more specifically, the UN Secretariat’s strategy for protecting international peace and security during the Cold War. 70  Scholarship on racism within international relations has been traditionally limited by the assumption that the ‘elite Western subject’ was the ‘implicit cosmopolitan subject’ and central ‘agent in the task of global justice’, 71  but critical research has begun to examine the racial power dynamics, inequalities, and hierarchies perpetuated through liberal international institutions, organisations, and networks. 72  Scholars such as Robert Vitalis, Errol Henderson, Inés Valdez, and Victor Ray have highlighted how international organisations, like the UN, behaved as racial structures despite projecting themselves – and being projected through traditional scholarship – as technocratic, race-neutral bureaucracies. 73  Ray, in particular, has

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emphasised that it is not the ‘individual prejudice and racial animus’ that is now being drawn to attention by this critical work, but the result of racialised logic combined with ‘organisational processes’ such as gatekeeping, exclusion, or knowledge production. It is not international staffs’ racism which deserves detailed analysis, it is the organisational mechanisms and interests which not only conceal but support the translation of staff’s racist thought into diplomatic decision-making, geopolitical structures, and inequal rules of engagement within the international order. This thesis builds upon this literature and demonstrates the presence of racism within the UN peacekeeping missions, tracing how international personnel reallocated patterns of authority and suppressed local activists in order to preserve nation-state hierarchies within the international order.

As European empires fractured across the Global South, previously unified colonial dominions splintered into territorial units and local activists mobilised to avoid re-colonisation and demand independence. Scholars have examined transnational activist networks between fellow anti-imperialists, and have unearthed the communications between colonial activists and transnational civil society. Meredith Terretta has explored the scale of anti-colonial activists petitioning the UN Trusteeship Council in British and French Cameroon during the 1950s, and the inaction of the UN in response. Her research has revealed the methods of grassroots anti-colonial networks as they sought to attract organisational attention to the violation of their human rights. This thesis seeks to complement this approach and illuminate side-lined anti-colonial activists’ petitions, letters, and personal interactions with UN peacekeepers. This dynamic is particularly evident in chapter 3 as it explores how UNTFA officials delegitimised West Papuan activists’ petitions to the UNTEA mission, the UN headquarters, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to demand self-determination. By choosing to not support or internationalise claims of rights abuses or demands for liberation, the UN staff


78 Terretta, “We Had Been Fooled into Thinking That the UN Watches Over the Entire World”, p. 331.
appeared to be ‘inactive’ – an accusation levied against UN peacekeeping staff both during the reports of abuses by Indonesian forces against West Papuan activists and during the St Hilarion siege against Turkish-Cypriot civilians in UNFICYP – whilst intentionally excluding marginalised populations from recourse or independence thus making them vulnerable to further abuses.

This thesis also bridges a gap between scholarship on late colonial interventionism and the literature devoted to the dramatic rise in peacekeeping missions from the late twentieth century onwards, as seen below in Fig. 4. The focus on administrative and civilian administrative staff helps to challenge military-focused narratives of peacekeeping that have neglected to examine the bureaucratic, governance, and diplomatic activities of UN peacekeepers and leadership. Considerable scholarly attention to the post-Cold War period of peacekeeping has been paid as a result of the increase in criticism of humanitarian interventions during the 1990s, as well as the increase of missions in the post-Cold War era. Following the failure of peacekeepers to protect civilians during the Rwandan and Srebrenica genocides, academics and practitioners questioned the ethics of UN operations and strategized how future missions could avoid such catastrophes. Post-colonial peacekeeping literature has also accused present-day missions of neo-colonialism, citing the geography and nationalities of host states and participating parties, and has analysed the damage of cross-cultural illiteracy and prejudices in military contexts. However, these works treat peacekeeping missions as a present-day invention, disconnected from histories of colonial governance and international interventionism. This thesis provides not only examples of practical colonial continuities through peacekeeping, but also argues that the specific context of decolonisation fostered patterns of racialised paternalism through the employment of international civil servants and the legitimisation of


colonial perceptions of decolonising or newly independent populations within the post-colonial international order.

![Graph showing dramatic rise in peacekeeping missions in the post-Cold War era from 1947 to 2014](https://ourworldindata.org/peacekeeping)

This is the first history to trace the colonial legacies perpetuated by UN peacekeepers’ practices and decision-making during decolonisation in a systematic manner. Existing scholarship on nineteenth-century interventionism reveals the efforts of colonial officials to adopt a ‘humanitarian’ guise in which to recast their imperialist activities. Historians of British imperialism focusing on late colonial development programmes have recently begun to examine how colonial staff used ‘foreign aid’, technical rhetoric, and collaboration with non-governmental organisations to mask extractive or political aims. They have demonstrated how the international development industry evolved from these colonial programmes and bureaucratic structures, fostering networks of exchange between the colonial sphere and internationalist

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83 M. Roser and M. Nagdy, ‘Peacekeeping’ [Available at: https://ourworldindata.org/peacekeeping Accessed on 18/05/2020].
spaces. A number of scholars, notably Joseph Hodge, have demonstrated that this produced a generation of international experts trained with an imperial lens of the Global South and who then, once decolonisation began, transferred these colonial intellectual and administrative practices to their next position. These scholars have shown how, during the 1950s and 1960s, many ex-colonial officials sought employment within the international field, such as the increasingly professionalised humanitarian sector, as many already had connections within the industry and were welcomed for their field-based experience. These mid-level officials have traditionally been neglected in UN historiography, as they were predominantly deployed to field-based missions or operations rather than high-diplomacy roles within the UN Secretariat. This thesis examines the results of this transfer, as peacekeeping missions forced ex-colonial officials and anti-colonial diplomats to work alongside one another. For instance, anti-colonial Iranian politician Dr Djalal Abdoh worked alongside several ex-colonial officials within the West Papua mission bureaucracy and relied upon their interactions with the local population to guide his own perceptions and flesh out his reports to the secretary-general. International diplomats’ and civil servants’ career trajectories often placed them within, or proximate to, the same UN networks, regardless of political stance; they spoke the same technocratic language and held similar paternalistic beliefs about host populations. As one Australian reporter commented on the UNTSEA staff’s arrival, ‘They are travellers. They haven’t seen each other since the Congo, or a technical assistance conference in Bolivia, or drinks at some airport bar years ago’. Thus, this thesis seeks to illuminate the variety of mid-level staff who reiterated colonial knowledge and legitimised prejudice against local populations – to each other and the international community – as a peacebuilding strategy.

Three key findings emerge from this thesis’s examination of the evolution of peacekeeping during decolonisation. First, the UN leadership used peacekeeping missions deployed to decolonising and post-colonial contexts as a means to protect and restore the...
reputation of the UN and demonstrate its value to the international community. During the Congo mission, the ONUC mission leadership’s reaction to the murder of Lumumba and military operations in Katanga challenged member-states’ conceptions of the organisation’s ability or judgment to manage a peacekeeping mission. This damage was specifically due to criticism, particularly from the United States, of the UN’s lack of capability and untrustworthiness following the violent struggle of Operation Morthor, which failed to eliminate mercenaries from the Katanga region of Congo. In the wake of ONUC, the UNTEA and UNFICYP missions provided vital diplomatic and operational opportunities for the UN leadership to repair the organisation’s standing and encourage member-states to pay their debts to the fiscally-stretched UN. By commanding a stabilising, military force, the mid-level peacekeepers could enmesh themselves in diplomatic discussions on the future of sovereignty in disputed territories, and thus promote the expertise and value of the organisation in international relations.

However, this reputational crisis also encouraged UN staff to dismiss ‘local’ elites in the mission’s host states and control the narrative of the conflict. UN bureaucrats collected, transmitted, and omitted information from the field to the international community through their reports to the secretary-general and the Security Council, thus shaping, in some ways, international understandings of local populations and regional conflicts. As is explored in Chapter 3, the construction and practices of the West Papua mission legitimised the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to the Indonesians and UN staff repeated the colonial characterisation of the Papuan population as ‘stone age’ cannibals to their colleagues and UN delegates in New York. Additionally, during the Cyprus mission, the UN mediator report written by UN special representative Galo Plaza shifted international conceptions of both the conflict on the ground and the mainland countries involved, in particular Turkey. Thus, the mid-level UN staff used their bureaucratic mandate and administrative machinery to manage the ‘official’ narrative of the conflict, the belligerents, and the local populations within the international community.

Peacekeepers’ political interference in post-colonial sovereignty was at odds with the UN leadership’s carefully orchestrated, public identity of the organisation as a figurehead of human rights and self-determination. Field-based staff deliberately conceived operations on the ground as distinct from the liberal ideals outlined in the UN Charter and formalised through the

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Decolonization Committee in 1960. Instead, peacekeeping missions, particularly UNTEA and UNFICYP, were driven by a defensive organisational culture in reaction to the reputational damage caused by the ONUC mission. As the UN leadership experimented with different approaches to field-based conflict resolution (such as, the addition of a UN mediator during the Cyprus mission) they revised and reshaped the role that peacekeeping missions would play in each conflict context. From the confident beginning with UNEF to the placating approach of the UN officials by UNFICYP, peacekeeping missions forced UN staff to navigate the political transformations of colonial powers, neo-colonial nations, and newly independent states through the framework of an operational mandate. As UN practices expanded to have greater involvement in diplomatic negotiations between warring parties, the organisation staff were increasingly faced with the incompatibility of peacekeeping principles and conflict resolution. Tied to the peacekeeping guiding principles of consent, impartiality, and the limited use of force, UN personnel had to balance the projected apolitical image of the mission with the mandated aims to restore law and order. Throughout this period, peacekeeping practices evolved to prioritise short-term solutions and anti-Soviet strategies, reflecting the trend of using the missions as both reputational repair and a ‘quick fix’.

The second key finding is that peacekeeping missions were, during the height of the Cold War, primary UN instruments for pro-democratic, ideological interference. Moving away from a Cold War historiography traditionally dominated by national, typically Anglo-American, foreign policy, as is particularly evident in scholarship on western interests and interventions during the Suez Crisis, Congo Crisis, and Cyprus Crisis, this thesis reveals the efforts of UN peacekeeping leadership and staff to ensure host territories elected, or were annexed by, a pro-democratic (or non-aligned) leader. The Americans’ efforts to purge the ‘subversive’ personnel within the UN Secretariat, during the early 1950s, curated an anti-Communist leadership with a liberal internationalist agenda. Peacekeeping missions offered unique opportunities for ideological interventions, under the administrative and technocratic guise of the mission mandate, such as installing pro-democratic or non-aligned figures in positions of power in newly independent nations. For example, as explored in Chapter 2, the ONUC mission leadership used their

infrastructural control to protect President Kasavubu’s position as Congolese Head of State. The UN leadership justified the determined pursuit of anti-Communism and anti-Soviet intrusion as a peacebuilding tactic rather than a violation of impartiality or an explicitly political act. UN Secretariat staff, in particular, Hammarskjöld, Bunche, and Thant, were anxious to ensure that the demands of host state populations and politicians would not unbalance their fight against global Communist aggression. This policy of anti-Communism within the UN leadership – in particular, the concept of anti-Communism as a strategy for international security – was inextricably linked with racism. As Richard Seymour argued, anti-Communist aims preserved, ‘a global racial hierarchy in which “Anglo-Saxon” civilisation was seen as the best safeguard of democracy’ and liberal peace. 97 This connection between racism and international peace and security is writ clear in chapter 2 as UN officials justified their political interference in Congolese infrastructure as necessary for the protection of law and order and a paternalistic choice that they had to make for the stability of the continent. ONUC staff’s racialised judgements of Prime Minister Lumumba’s capacity to govern compounded with rumours of his Communist fidelity to create a figure who presented, to them, a significant threat to Congolese stability and, thus, international peace and security. Thus, peacekeeping missions’ interventions in host states entrenched the racist assumption that maintaining white supremacy and Western interests in unstable states was in the greater interests of preserving international peace and security (i.e. anti-Communism) and part of their mandate to restore law and order. The mid-level peacekeeping officials controlled host states’ core structures of governance and intervened in political networks, deviating from and overruling the political demands of the local population to ensure that the newly independent nation aligned with the liberal internationalist order. 98

Thirdly, this thesis uncovers how mid-level peacekeepers perpetuated colonial structures and took inspiration from imperial administrations. Mid-level UN peacekeepers used the

missions to experiment with non-state administration and policing, inspired by imperial laws and executive powers, to establish mission control over a population. Their reiteration of colonial assumptions about Global South populations and prioritisation of organisational interests legitimised these unequal dynamics under the guise of peacebuilding. Rooted in the nineteenth-century colonial rhetoric of *mission civilisatrice* and staffed by career diplomats, the peacekeeping bureaucracy on the ground was permeated with a culture of international exceptionalism further exacerbated by a humanitarian power hierarchy of the ‘saviour’, morally and intellectually positioned above the ‘beneficiary’. As will be explored in Chapters 2 and 3, much of the mid-level peacekeepers’ feelings of exceptionalism was grounded in a culture of racism and infantilisation of the Congolese and West Papuan populations, thus, driving peacekeepers’ paternalistic justifications for political interventions in the host countries. Colonial (pre)conceptions and methods of law and order inspired UN stabilising operations and were reinforced by a belief that technocratic judgement over the political direction of the post-colonial nation was superior to the opinions of the local population. By illustrating the variety of practical and prejudicial colonial continuities in peacekeeping operations, this thesis provides vital insight into how peacekeepers perceived, and interacted with, local civilians, and how peacekeeping practices were informed by these perceptions.

Methodologically, this thesis examines four UN peacekeeping missions by using a wide range of international and state archives. It is built upon analysis of UN public documents (General Assembly and Security Council minutes, emergency meetings, resolutions, letters, reports), internal communications (telegrams, cables, memos, reports, letters, handwritten notes), personal papers (diaries, letters, unofficial photographs, unpublished or drafted memoirs), and published material (information booklets, press releases, press conferences, newspaper articles, obituaries). These folders also hold photographs of peacekeepers and those relevant have been cited in text and in the annex of this thesis. These files are held by the UN archives, based in-house in New York and digitised on the UN archives website.99

Oral histories collected by the Yale-UN Oral History Project in the early 1990s, available via the UN digital library, have also been vital to provide an insight into the narratives of mid-level peacekeeping bureaucrats. The interviews were recorded in the early 1990s and were led by Jean Krasno and James S. Sutterlin following sponsorship from Yale University. Sutterlin was Director of the project due to his long career in various roles within the UN Secretariat and American academia. In contrast, Krasno was a doctoral student during these interviews.

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researching Brazilian politics. She went on to teach on UN peacekeeping and international relations once she completed her PhD in 1995 and has remained in academia. Those interviewed were a mix of UN officials, ambassadors from various countries, and other participants in relevant events, such as the Suez Crisis and the Congo Crisis. This thesis has used several of these oral histories, predominantly Krasno’s interview with Šture Linnér (Chief of Civilian Operations during the ONUC mission) and Sutterlin’s interview with F.T. Liu (a career international civil servant within the UN Secretariat who worked as a special representative to the secretary-general during both ONUC and UNFICYP missions).

Additionally, this thesis selectively uses biographical information and details of UN personalities’ past appointments, sourced from memoirs, personal papers, and obituaries, to gain access to institutional biases and to contextualise field-based practices and decision-making. Firstly, biographical details and information relating to UN officials’ previous careers provides a further layer of insight into the UN’s staffing biases and prejudices. By better understanding the professional experiences and ideological preferences of a UN official, this thesis has been able to uncover the UN leadership’s strategy for each mission. The recruitment of a peacekeeping official imparted significant decision-making authority to the field and so the UN leadership recognised the need to hire someone with the experience and recommendations which aligned with their strategy for the mission mandate and conflict context. For instance, the recruitment of Šture Linnér in ONUC revealed that Hammarskjöld sought to position an external hire with an anti-bureaucratic approach and close mining ties at the heart of the Congo administration. His appointment suggested that Hammarskjöld’s approach was to prioritise the rough-and-ready governance of the nation over consultation with Congolese officials, whilst seeking a diplomatic alliance with the Belgian miners in the south of the nation. Second, using biographical details has also provided insight into peacekeeping leadership’s attitudes toward conflict contexts and geopolitics, thus influencing their decision-making in the field. Many UN officials, such as Djalal Abdoh, held previous positions which placed them at the centre of transnational diplomatic networks, like the Non-Aligned Movement. These networks fostered united positions or perspectives on issues of international security. For Abdoh, his presence at the Bandung Conference encouraged him to take a sympathetic approach to Indonesia’s claim over West Papua despite his acknowledgement of widespread reports of violence towards Papuan independence activists. Thus, using biographical details and sources has allowed this thesis to uncover the institutional strategy for each mission as well as contextualise peacekeeping officials’ decision-making once deployed to the ground.
This thesis also uses progress reports, communication between the ICRC and UN staff in the field and headquarters, and petitions from activist groups in Congo and West Papua. These documents are held in the ICRC archives in Geneva. For a British perspective, the thesis uses British foreign policy reports and communications with embassies and the UK mission to the UN, held by the British National Archives in Kew. The Bodleian Library, Oxford, maintains the archives of the United Nations Career Records Project (UNCRP) which provided access to oral histories, personal papers, and memoirs of British peacekeepers, diplomats, and their wives. In particular, the personal papers of UNFICYP British Battalion commander Robert Pascoe provide crucial insight into the military disorganisation and anxiety during the 1967 eruption of violence in Cyprus. The British Library, based in London, holds a significant number of editions of The Sand Dune, which were invaluable for researching Chapter 1. This thesis has also used articles from newspapers, for example The New York Times, The Guardian, The Straits Times, The Sydney Morning Herald, and The Cyprus Mail, available through the ProQuest website. Supplementary sources were provided by the digitised archives of Amnesty International, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Working ‘along the archival grain’, with state and non-state official documents, has helped to illuminate UN officials’ plans, prejudices, and priorities through their communications within the peacekeeping bureaucracy. The extensive UN administrative files and ICRC archives have provided vital insights into the ‘minor’ histories of internal debates, private thoughts, secret meetings, scribbled comments in the margin, and discarded drafts otherwise lost in homogenous narratives of missions. They have allowed access to the political and organisational anxieties of the UN peacekeeping staff and international experts as they were faced with increasingly complex political disputes. As Ann Stoler has argued, ‘Against the sober formulaics of officialese, these archives register the febrile movements of persons off balance—of thoughts and feelings in and out of place. In tone and temper they convey the rough interior ridges of governance and disruptions to the deceptive clarity of its mandates’. The UN archival documents, in particular, have been invaluable for demonstrating the damage of impulsive or

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101 These discarded and informal sources were especially useful for Chapter 2. In particular, a candid, handwritten letter from Dr Ralph Bunche revealed deeply personal perceptions about Congolese politicians and Dutch representatives. His letter concluded, ‘My apologies for both rambling and scribbling. Where there is something serious to report I’ll be shorter and more sober’: United Nations Archives (henceforth, UNA), S-1069-0012-11, ‘Letter-report from Bunche to Hammarskjöld’, 4th July 1960.
palliative peacekeeping efforts when time is short, resources are depleted, and the UN staff did ‘what needed to be done’.

However, retrieving local responses or criticism of these missions within UN, NGO, and state archives has proved fragmentary and has been obfuscated by a Eurocentric lens. Mission interviews or reports from interactions with local populations reveal UN officials’ perceptions of the population, but they also actively reproduce colonial discourses and knowledge; they are not ‘stories’ but ‘generative substances with histories… of their own’. By taking a post-colonial approach to the archives, this thesis examines these reports and internal communications as part of larger patterns of the taxonomy of colonised populations, rather than as products of technocratic ‘fact’. Indeed, the humanitarian sector adopted and reformed the scientific methods of late colonial development schemes through international field-based practices, such as peacekeeping missions. A post-colonial approach has encouraged further examination of Eurocentric assumptions of, for example, education levels and political activity, within the UN files, and helped to expose peacekeepers’ roles in the perpetuation of colonial ideas and knowledge. Additionally, anti-colonial activists frequently engaged with the UN officials directly as a means of amplifying their demands (or the demands of others) by sending copies of petitions and pamphlets to New York and Geneva. These have been instrumental in building insight into how host populations perceived UN interventions and, more broadly, the function of an international humanitarian system; why were they writing to this organisation and what did they hope would come from this contact? On the other hand, not all activists did write to the UN and thus the UN archives are limited in how far they can illuminate marginalised voices. However, the UN sources, even if limited, have facilitated a better understanding of the relationship(s) between the peacekeepers and local populations as both parties negotiated shared spaces, political aims, and territorial imaginaries in tandem.

This thesis is driven by an in-depth consideration of what role the first four UN peacekeeping missions played during decolonisation and an exploration of how the agendas of the UN leadership and peacekeeping staff shifted and were reshaped by each geopolitical context. Although the Cold War remained a constant throughout these four disputes, the regional allegiances and relationships with the United States and Soviet Union provoked a range of different political obstacles for the UN mission staff between UNEF and UNFICYP. For instance, the diplomatic negotiations by U Thant to prevent Indonesian aggression in West Papua required a different approach to that of the UN Force Commander of UNFICYP when

faced with smuggled Czech arms. The thesis concludes with a consideration of how the UN leadership’s perception of the organisation’s role in the field was transformed due to these four conflict contexts and an interrogation of what the comparative approach has revealed about colonial continuities in UN peacekeeping practices.

Chapter 1 examines the evolution of the peacekeeping project during a period of geopolitical transformation within the UN Security Council and General Assembly as the Afro-Asian bloc expanded in voting power. This chapter argues that the Suez Crisis, particularly the military invention by two founding members of the UN, pushed the Afro-Asian bloc to call for a UN military response, UNEF, through the General Assembly. Once authorised, the UN leadership and mid-level staff, such as Force Commander General Burns, navigated the diplomatic challenge of designing the mission’s national battalions while maintaining the consent of the Egyptians. By deploying only middle powers, and excluding the permanent states from participation, the peacekeeping leadership sought to avoid accusations of neo-colonialism. Thus, UNEF was instrumental as a way for middle power states to assert their military weight and achieve diplomatic credentials during decolonisation, diminishing – although not eradicating – the authority of the permanent member-states within UN forums. Once on the ground, the UNEF mission shifted international perceptions of the organisation from a simply deliberative forum to an active military actor. Mid-level peacekeepers and participating troops began to cultivate a peacekeeper identity through a mission magazine, underpinned by their Orientalist understandings of their space of deployment and the liberal cosmopolitan ideal of the UN Charter. This chapter examines how the ‘invention’ of peacekeeping expanded UN operational functions in the midst of a dramatic geopolitical shift and established peacekeeping as a popular response to post-colonial territorial disputes within the General Assembly.

Chapter 2 investigates the imperial continuities and neo-colonial character of the infrastructural support provided by the ONUC mission during the first phase of the Congo Crisis as the mid-level staff implemented their strategy for the large-scale project. The chapter considers the on-going presence of Belgian capitalists and colonial officials in the country and how the peacekeeping operation was both facilitated and obstructed by Belgian technicians. This chapter also offers an overview of how UN staff used the access of technical assistance projects, such as the radio station and airport, to control the political future of the nation. By analysing contemporary international and domestic responses to these efforts to interfere in Congolese leadership, this chapter unearths colonial dynamics and racial hierarchies at the heart of the peacekeeping bureaucracy and how they influenced UN operations. This chapter explores how patterns of paternalistic rhetoric, cultural exceptionalism, and intentional anti-Communist
interference were recast as international expertise in peacebuilding. The UN staff’s political interference in the Congolese constitutional crisis in September 1960 was the first in a series of ONUC crises that ignited international controversy and criticism of the UN leadership’s decision-making.105

Chapter 3 considers the long shadow of the Congo mission on UN operations as the UN faced financial and reputational crisis in 1962. Seeking reputational repair, the UN leadership negotiated a peacekeeping mission to monitor the transfer of West Papua from Dutch administration to Indonesian annexation. This chapter argues that the policies of the UNTEA administration actively delegitimised and dismissed Papuans’ political activities as a means of ensuring the success of the mission in the stable transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to the Indonesians. This chapter analyses the internal correspondence of the UNTEA bureaucracy as the divisional commissioners and administrative leadership discussed the mission’s responsibility in West Papua. Once they observed the vibrant political activism in the territory and the obstructive efforts of Indonesian personnel, the mission leadership adopted symbols of statehood, such as postage stamps and flag ceremonies, to control the territory. Rather than passive manipulation by Indonesian or American delegates, as the existing literature maintains, this chapter reveals the self-interest and racial prejudice of the UN peacekeepers and explores how ‘othering’ the Papuan population from other self-determination campaigns underpinned the gatekeeping of Papuan activists’ demands for independence.

Chapter 4 argues that the Force’s efforts at maintaining stability in Cyprus encouraged a political environment of stagnation, fostering an entrenchment of hostilities between the communities. Due to a late deployment to the ground, the Force leadership arrived in an ongoing military and humanitarian crisis between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots. Peacekeepers improvised and favoured palliative solutions, so as to establish stability as quickly as possible, enabling dependence on external sources of relief and increasing displaced populations’ vulnerability to political instrumentalisation. The mission also expanded peacekeeping functions to recruit a UNFICYP mediator who was responsible for the diplomatic settlement of the crisis. The first UN mediator engaged mainland state actors in discussions held in Geneva and prioritised an external solution to the crisis. However, the second UN mediator proposed that discussions should be returned to the island and that elected officials should be at the centre of discussions. The Turkish government’s controversial response to the UN mediator’s report exposed the extent of the UN’s powerlessness in the face of member-state criticism. The mission

105 Future criticisms within the ONUC mission were related to the murders of Lumumba and his colleagues, Operation Morthor, and the assassination of Hammarskjöld in 1961.
provided a crutch for the belligerents and prevented Cypriots from negotiating with one another. The repercussions of the second mediator’s report highlighted the stagnation of the Cyprus mission and ignited internal discussions about the damage of the Force presence. By 1971, the UN leadership and contributing nations openly questioned the future role of the UN in international conflict response following the organisation’s experience in Cyprus.

Rethinking the mechanisms through which sovereignty was negotiated and renegotiated from the mid-1950s onwards allows us to better understand the loci of power that influenced the processes of decolonisation and formation of the post-colonial international order. Examining the four original military missions illuminates the diversity of colonial continuities in peacekeeping operations. Mid-level bureaucrats were faced with different ex-colonial powers – British, Belgian, Dutch – and the intricacies of the political and economics legacies of each colonial administration on the host country’s society. Additionally, these territorial disputes erupted at different points in the population’s process of decolonisation: Egypt had been, nominally, independent from Britain for three decades before the Suez Crisis; the Congo Crisis developed a fortnight after Congolese Independence Day; West Papua was still colonised by the Dutch when the UNTEA mission arrived; and Cyprus was three years post-independence and precariously peaceful until December 1963. Comparing these missions illuminates the heterogeneity of the sovereignty disputes faced by UN peacekeeping staff during decolonisation and reveals how geopolitical implications of their interventions within the UN forums in New York shifted in importance throughout the period as the organisation’s global position changed. By recentring peacekeeping in the history of twentieth century international relations and security, this thesis reveals the patterns in peacekeeping practices from 1956-1971 and unearths the mid-level bureaucrats that shaped post-colonial sovereignty for the new international order.
1. The Invention of Peacekeeping? Suez and the transformation of the UN’s role in international security 1956-1959

Figs. 5 and 6: On the left, a map of Israeli occupation in 1957. On the right, UNEF troops were deployed to restore the borders of the 1949 Armistice Agreement © Truman Library

This chapter traces the evolution of UNEF and the changing dynamics of its identity from the mission’s origin in UN headquarters to its operations on the frontline. When the General Assembly authorised UNEF, few could have predicted the long-term consequences of liberal internationalist visions on nation-state sovereignty. Internationalist visions drove an expansion of UN functions from predominantly deliberative to actively interventionist, as the organisation’s leadership shifted towards militarism. Liberal internationalism underpinned the foundation of the UN Charter and its principles reflect those foreign policy ideals.¹ This shared discourse between Western diplomats and international civil servants during the early years of the Cold War, provided the impetus for others to construct a military function under UN jurisdiction with the power to implement liberal norms within decolonising contexts. The ‘invention’ of peacekeeping gave UN staff the justification to intervene in the affairs of host states pursuing alternative

¹ Although it was not the only internationalist school of thought, as explored in Mazower, Governing the World.
political doctrines and to police host state governance as a peacebuilding strategy, shaping the sovereign norms of the post-colonial international order.²

Peacekeeping missions transformed the UN into an authority that could orchestrate and manage an armed military force in a conflict zone. The first ‘official’ peacekeeping missions were an observer mission deployed to the Middle East in 1948 – United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) – and the UN Command in Korea in 1950, but the innovation of an armed force challenged preconceptions of the organisation’s character and agency within the international sphere. The shift towards military intervention within the UN had been developing throughout the past decade, but the specific context of the Suez Crisis accelerated the functional expansion of peacekeeping. The UN General Assembly agreed Resolution 1001 forming UNEF on 7th November 1956, with a mandate to install and maintain a ceasefire between the warring parties in Sinai and Gaza.³ Israeli, British, and French troops occupied the territory surrounding the Suez canal in October 1956, provoking the UN leadership to react militarily to defend the integrity of the UN Charter. Geoffrey Murray (Senior Counsellor in charge of Political Committee Items for the Canadian Permanent Mission to the UN) was present during the negotiations for the peacekeeping mission that became UNEF and spent two years seconded to the UN Secretariat during the mission.⁴ According to him, the ‘UN meant business’ in the face of UN Charter violations by two founding members, Britain and France.⁵ The first armed peacekeeping mission resolution unsettled the state-actor monopoly on war and authorised an inter-governmental armed force, led by mid-level UN officials, to intervene directly alongside other military actors as a representative of collective global interests in ‘peace’; a significant diplomatic shift in international relations and the environment of war.

This chapter will examine different levels of the mission’s public information campaigns to reveal the multiple characterisations of UNEF to different audiences: mission troops; contributing nations; and the international community. It traces the internal debates between diplomats and UN officials during the Suez Crisis, as the organisation’s leadership reeled in response to Britain and France’s invasion of Suez. It focuses on how UN officials and state representatives collaborated to reassert the importance of the organisation in response to the UN Secretariat fallout, post-Suez Crisis. An institutional repercussion of the crisis was the reconfiguration of the UN Charter’s mechanisms, with the permissions of Chapter 6 expanded

³ UN Doc, A/3354, ‘Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during its First Emergency Special Session: from 1 November to 10 November 1956’, p. 3.
to authorise peacekeeping functions.\(^6\) The Secretariat officials’ in-depth consideration of optics and politics in the design of UNEF’s contingent countries speaks to the diplomatic wrangling involved in the construction of UNEF. Once constructed by high-level diplomats in New York, the mission staff and troops arrived and sought to construct an identity for UNEF peacekeepers that would gel the multilateral battalions into an ‘authentic’ force. Analytically shifting to the construction of UNEF troop identity, the chapter then focuses on peacekeepers’ perceptions and experiences of the local population and landscape during their deployment to Sinai and Gaza. Building upon the scholarship of Edward Said, Debbie Lisle, and Cynthia Enloe, this section uses the troop magazine *The Sand Dune*, to reveal the peacekeepers’ colonial, Orientalist, and objectifying fantasies of the region and host population. Ultimately, this section argues that the magazine was a vehicle for a cosmopolitan vision (i.e. unity or consensus through national diversity) of liberal international collaboration and, crucially, permeated the militarism of the troops’ activities with a moral narrative.\(^7\)

The peacekeeping mission to the Middle East was a response to a series of violent invasions in the Suez region of Egypt, known collectively as the ‘Suez Crisis’. Egyptian President Abdel Nasser’s decision to nationalise the Suez Canal Company, as part of a broader policy of reclaiming Egyptian sovereignty, threatened British governmental interests and challenged their right to maintain post-colonial authority over the resources of independent Egypt. Decades of nominal independence coupled with international interference had built up widespread Egyptian bitterness against Britain’s continued profit from their land and waterways.\(^8\) The canal had been a vital route for colonial transport and extraction since it opened in 1869.\(^9\) The British occupation of the area from 1882 became a demonstration of their colonial economic and political power to their electorate and imperial populations.\(^10\)

Different nations sought to regulate the movement and mobility of people, goods, and ideas through the canal, demonstrating the canal’s centrality in the process of globalisation. As Valeska Huber’s global history has suggested, Britain was one of many nations, initiatives, and private companies that struggled for control of the canal during

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\(^6\) UN Doc, UN Charter, ‘Chapter Six’ [Available at: https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vi/ Accessed on 02/12/2019].


the increased popularity of the ‘global shortcut’. Nasser’s decision to nationalise the Suez Canal Company was motivated by long-existing ideological interests and more immediate economic constraints implemented by the World Bank in 1956. The violent Anglo-French-Israeli response to Nasser’s nationalisation policy shocked the international community and the UN General Assembly became a popular forum for nations to voice their outrage or support for the invading forces. This increased use of the General Assembly signalled the growing value of UN deliberative forums in the resolution of post-colonial territorial disputes.

By November 1956, invading forces had yet to withdraw despite several international condemnations of the invasion. This inaction prompted complaints from the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahmoud Fawzi, on the futility of the UN in a context of a breach of sovereignty. In a meeting between Nasser, Fawzi, and the secretary-general, Dag Hammarskjöld acknowledged this problem and was reportedly concerned that, “These armed forces are […] consolidating their positions in Egyptian territory in complete disregard for Egypt’s sovereign rights and in defiance to the United Nations and to the world”. Hammarskjöld eventually mediated a ceasefire before the Anglo-French invasion completely encompassed the canal region, and commenced the construction of UNEF. He drafted a mandate for an international force that would be authorised to maintain the ceasefire between Egyptian and Israeli forces in Sinai and oversee the withdrawal of the British and French troops from the region.

**Historiographies of the Suez Crisis, international law, and middle power diplomacy**

This chapter builds on different strands of historiography. Firstly, scholarship on the Suez Crisis has characterised it as a turning point in British perceptions of its role in the world. Historians of the British Empire have argued that the political decline of British Prime Minister Anthony Eden following his poor decision-making regarding Suez, and the national memory of thus global humiliation represented a total collapse of the British Empire. Scholars such as Simon

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15 Ibid.
Smith, Roger Louis, Anna Bocking-Welch, and Anthony Stockwell have provided nuanced understandings of British decision-making in response to the nationalisation of the canal by conceiving this moment as the beginning of a transformation of British imperialism rather than a collapse.\(^\text{17}\) An anti-imperial consensus did not emerge in Britain following the Suez Crisis.\(^\text{18}\) Instead, imperialists in Britain were motivated in opposition to the international critique and — despite the ‘fiasco’ of Suez for formal British colonial aspirations in the Middle East — Suez marked a point of departure and re-creation for British interests in the Gulf and within its colonial dominions elsewhere.\(^\text{19}\) Smith, Steven Galpern, and Stephen Blackwell have argued that the US State Department sought to support British colonial relationships across the world in the aftermath of the crisis, following a brief period of ostracization, as the Americans saw greater value in the maintenance of imperial assets than their destruction.\(^\text{20}\) Thus, the Suez Crisis, and its aftermath as the British government engaged with the UN mission, served as a point of regeneration for the British Empire and British international interests in post-colonial contexts, rather than a moment of collapse.\(^\text{21}\) Instead, the humiliation of the crisis, and international reaction from the Afro-Asian bloc, drove post-crisis British officials to maintain a close interest in the region and, once deployed, a collaborative relationship with the UNEF leadership emerged. This scholarship has thus concluded that the embarrassment of the crisis fed into British diplomats’ efforts to control the narrative of the crisis by remaining involved through the UN mission; it was a political exercise in damage control.

A second strand of historiography examining statehood, decolonisation, and non-state armed interventions regards the legal innovation of the UN peacekeeping force as a watershed moment for the contestations of the foundational Westphalian principle of sovereignty.\(^\text{23}\) The role of the mission in standard-setting, or as a ‘model’ for future missions, has been emphasised

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22 For example, see: Bocking-Welch, *British Civil Society at the End of Empire*, p. 92.

in historical reflections on the evolution of UN practice. Alex Bellamy, Paul Williams, and Stuart Griffin conceive of UNEF’s mandate as the origin of UN peacekeeping’s ‘holy trinity’ of principles: impartiality, limited use of force, and consent. Similarly, Ilana Feldman has defined UNEF’s principle-focused practices as part of a process of ‘narrowing the contours of first-generation peacekeeping’ or, in simpler terms, precedent-setting. Thus, within political scholarship, UNEF represents the principled original mission from which present-day missions have deviated.

Legal scholarship focusing on the development of states’ sovereignty and uses of force have frequently described UNEF as a landmark case in shifting the norms of international conflict and territorial occupation. Researchers have focused on the ramifications of the precedent established by the UNEF mission and have considered the legality of the mission. One group has argued that the legal doctrine of ‘Uniting for Peace’, which permitted the General Assembly to respond to breaches of international peace and security, violated the UN Charter by eschewing the authorisation of the use of force through the Security Council and circumventing the permanent members’ veto. The other group contends that the ‘Uniting for Peace’ precedent was a legitimate adaptation to customary international law and, therefore, resolutions passed under it are not a breach of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the use of force without Security Council authorisation. However, as Egypt consented to UNEF, these debates focus on the legality of the expansion of UN’s functions rather than considering the mission itself a breach of sovereignty – a criticism of later missions authorised under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. Peacekeeping’s legal bearing existed between the UN Charter’s permissions

31 Chapter 7 of the UN Charter refers to ‘Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression’ and provides the Security Council recourse to take action to ‘prevent an aggravation of the situation’, such as economic sanctions, interruption of communication systems, severing diplomatic relations and use of member-state facilities, armed forces and rights of passage ‘necessary for the purpose of maintaining international
outlined in Chapter 6 (the pacific settlement of disputes) and Chapter 7 (action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression).\textsuperscript{32} Thus although not directly authorised by the Charter, UNEF was described by Hammarskjöld as emerging from ‘Chapter 6 and a half’ as it was to be ‘different… from the [UNTSO] observers’, whilst, ‘para-military in nature, not a force with military objectives’.\textsuperscript{33} These studies have illuminated the innovations undertaken by UN leadership as they expanded the organisation’s functions and permissions in response to geopolitical demands.

Finally, diplomatic histories of middle power states, such as Canada, have argued that the UNEF mission represented a turning point in international power hierarchies within UN forums. UNEF’s creation presented a transformative opportunity for middle powers international relations in the postwar period. Representative forums such as the General Assembly provided a democratic space for newly independent nations to vote as diplomatic actors and donate operational or materiel support.\textsuperscript{34} However, the Afro-Asian bloc was not the only party that chose to use UNEF as a means of diplomatic influence. Asa McKercher has examined the relationship between Canada and the Afro-Asian bloc during this period and has argued that Canada stood apart from the bloc as a ‘western country’ within the international forums, but without the title of ‘major power’.\textsuperscript{35} Canadian representatives used this flexible ‘middle power’ identity – as a Western nation that was not a permanent member – to their political advantage to lobby for peacekeeping with both NATO countries and the anti-imperialists within the Afro-Asian bloc. For Canada, this was an opportunity to project an internationalist image as one of the founders of peacekeeping whilst protecting NATO interests.\textsuperscript{36} The collaboration and competition between the middle powers during the authorisation of UNEF was part of the transformations to diplomatic power within the international community during the decolonising period. Following in these scholars’ footsteps, this chapter examines how middle power states, like Canada and India, used the invention of peacekeeping to their diplomatic advantage, profiting from their exclusion from the Security Council’s permanent membership. The national

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} G. Hughes, ‘Blessed are the Peacekeepers?’, \textit{The Round Table}, Vol. 106:4, (2017), p. 365.
\item \textsuperscript{33} UN Doc, A/3302, ‘Second and final report of the Secretary-General on the plan for an emergency international United Nations force requested in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 4 November 1956’, 6 November 1956, p. 5.
\end{itemize}
composition of UNEF-participating battalions marked a significant shift in international relations from great power hegemony to middle power inclusion.

Reconfiguring the UN Charter to heal its violation

By the mid-1950s, the idea of an international armed peacekeeping force had been circulating in European and North American liberal internationalist networks for decades. The expansion of the UN into military deployment became an increasingly attractive prospect for liberal Western delegates inspired by previous plans for international forces. League leadership had debated the practical design of the (later abandoned) peacekeeping mission to Vilna in 1920-21. The League of Nations’ plans provided a formative blueprint for political, legal, and technical preparations for UNEF. In addition to military officials and career diplomats, scholars also began to discuss the legal, financial and diplomatic ramifications of such a function within the UN structure. Politicians and activists specifically within ‘Western’ circles discussed the legal reality of a peacekeeping mission. Steps toward a UN-led international mission began with the UNTSO unarmed mission to the Middle East in 1948 which tested the practical implementation of a non-governmental international force deployed in a conflict context.

The development of an international armed force under US command in Korea paved the way for more practical considerations of a UN-led peacekeeping mission. The legal responsibility of the UN for the force was minimal, as officially the force was conceived as a transnational alliance acting in self-defence. As Patrick Norton has examined, ‘The United States made all important combat decisions, either alone or in consultation with the other military participants on the U.N. side. The "Unified Command," i.e., the U.S. Government, sent reports to the United Nations only after the fact.’


References:
Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. However, the deployment of a military force under the UN flag was a significant symbolic expansion of UN activities. Additionally, Barnes indicates growing state-actor demand for UN involvement in conflicts. Member-states were beginning to see that the UN’s development into a military agent had potential for state collaboration, collusion, and control on the ground, even before peacekeeping was a functional reality. Following the Suez invasion in October 1956, these ideas about an UN international force gained traction, especially as the organisation already had military observers in the Middle East with the UNTSO mission. The diplomatic support to construct an international force had been maintained within US liberal internationalist and military circles and the conflict in Sinai presented an opportunity for these ideas to become a practical reality.

The authorship of the mission, and, thus, the assignment of political credit for the idea, became a point of contention between Britain and Canada. Anthony Eden was the first to publicly suggest that a UN international force might be the solution to stabilising the canal region. However, telegrams between Ottawa and London demonstrate that Canadian officials were also making these suggestions within their Cabinet. In a telegram from British diplomat G. D. Anderson to Robert Belgrave, Office of the British High Commissioner, Ottawa, this authorship was shared: ‘Clearly, therefore, the idea of a UN Force was independently present in both our own and in Canadian minds on 1st November’. As Canadian diplomats sought to establish a new national identity through the humanitarian guise of authorship of peacekeeping – a national imaginary that has been challenged by a series of recent histories – Britain sought to cling to its old national identity of a benevolent interventionist imperial power through connection to the mission’s origin story.

The lack of UN officials in these early plans for a UN force in Suez challenges the narrative presented by the organisation in present-day literature. Hammarskjöld is typically presented as centrally involved in the early phase of UNEF’s creation. The combined efforts of Hammarskjöld and Canadian diplomat Lester Pearson have become fundamental to historical

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44 The use of the UN flag by the UN Command was authorised under UNSC Resolution 84: UN Doc, S/1588, ‘Resolution 84: Complaint of aggression upon the Republic of Korea’, 7th July 1950.
46 Ibid.
retellings of the force’s design.\textsuperscript{49} Pearson had been considered for the job of secretary-general in 1946 and again in 1953 against Hammarskjöld and had since been heavily involved in Canadian foreign policy. His efforts in the mediation process during the Korean war\textsuperscript{50} positioned him as a well-respected, trusted diplomat within UN circles.\textsuperscript{51} Additionally, Pearson won the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts with drafting the UNEF General Assembly resolution, cementing his reputation as one of the forefathers of UN peacekeeping.\textsuperscript{52} However, Pearson and Hammarskjöld did not construct UNEF in a vacuum. Pearson worked in collaboration with American Secretary of State John Dulles to produce the original proposal for a Security Council resolution to vote on the creation of an international force. The first few drafts of Pearson’s proposals were rejected by Dulles. Pearson sought to construct ‘a halfway house at the crossroads of war’, and to expand the UN’s functions with, ‘an intermediate technique between merely passing resolutions and actually fighting’.\textsuperscript{53} Pearson wanted the force to be operational as swiftly as possible and so proposed a ‘putting the umbrellas up’ force, whereby the deployed British and French troops would be used.\textsuperscript{54} He disguised this in the draft as ‘forces immediately available’ to avoid public criticism.\textsuperscript{55} However, Dulles had openly denounced the Anglo-French invasion and recognised that President Eisenhower would be similarly scornful of such a plan to involve invading forces in the peacekeeping mission.\textsuperscript{56} In Canadian diplomat Murray’s recollection of these meetings with Dulles he commented, ‘The [US] President was not going to rake the Anglo-French chestnuts’, indicating that the Suez invasion remained at the forefront of Dulles’s decision-making.\textsuperscript{57} Pearson revised the draft proposal to ensure the support of the US Presidency, ensuring that American national preferences remained central in the internationalist project.

Hammarskjöld’s absence from these initial processes is skimmed over in institutional literature on the creation of the UNEF. The General Assembly voted the Swedish diplomat, ‘the

\textsuperscript{49} Carroll, \textit{Pearson’s Peacekeepers}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{51} Murray, ‘Interview transcript’, pp. 10-11
\textsuperscript{53} UNA, S-0313-0005-06, ‘Department of Information publication: UNEF report’, undated.
\textsuperscript{54} Murray, ‘Interview transcript’, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Murray, ‘Interview transcript’, p. 28.
darkest of dark horses,’ into the role in 1953, after Pearson had been vetoed by the Soviet Union. Hammarskjöld’s background in the Swedish aristocracy, economics, and public service led representatives to hope that he would focus on administration rather than political showmanship. Emery Kelén wrote that the new secretary-general had an unthreatening presence, making him attractive to the UN permanent member-states, excluding the PRC, as ‘a brilliant economist, an unobtrusive technician, and an aristo-bureaucrat’. Although not a first choice of the Soviet bloc, the Soviet representative Valerian Zorin was reportedly in a hurry to elect Hammarskjöld. His perceived success as a mediator in 1954 during the Korean War further confirmed to the UN member-states that his ‘behind the scenes’ approach was instrumental in resolving international disputes.

However, whilst Pearson drafted the Security Council resolution, the Suez Crisis upset the secretary-general and his cosmopolitan aspirations for the organisation. In the details of the discussions surrounding the creation of UNEF, Hammarskjöld emerges as betrayed and protective. He publicly questioned the value of the UN if two of its permanent members would so flagrantly violate its Charter and reject his efforts to resolve the situation. Hammarskjöld and his inner circle perceived the use of force in invading Egypt, breaching Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, as not only a personal betrayal, but a betrayal of the UN project. Indeed, Hammarskjöld obliquely offered his resignation to the Security Council on 31 October 1956 in response to the invasion, demonstrating his frustration that the principles of the UN Charter had been violated by founding members. Murray recollects the emotional fall-out during meetings between the Canadian diplomats and the UN Secretariat following the Suez invasion, ‘It’s not some sort of legalistic approach, it’s simply that this was what the organisation was all about, that [Hammarskjöld] didn’t see how he could really make much of this mess… he believed so much in the Charter and the sanctity of the Charter commitment’. Hammarskjöld’s personal involvement in the crisis, and his belief that his talks with both nation’s representatives over the

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summer of 1956 had been successful in maintaining the peace in Suez, served to paralyse the diplomat, in addition to the Charter’s violation.69

Hammarskjöld was not alone in his reaction. The Egyptian UN Representative Fawzi was predictably condemning of the invasion:

Israel has been saying time and again that it owes its existence to the United Nations. France and the United Kingdom are among the authors of the Charter, are constituent Members of the United Nations, and are, moreover permanent members of the Security Council. It was therefore to be assumed and expected that they would show particular respect for this Organisation and particular care for its purposes and ideals. Yet what have they done? … Have they shown respect for the Charter of the United Nations, or is the Charter groaning in anguish because of their actions?70

His sentiments were shared by many other nations in the Afro-Asian bloc, such as Indonesia, who framed it as a betrayal of the UN Charter, the international community, and the vision of cosmopolitanism that was foundational to the organisation’s purpose.71

The betrayal of Anglo-French governments in Suez encouraged Hammarskjöld to support the functional expansion from rhetorical condemnation to military action in the defence of the principles of international security outlined in the UN Charter. Hammarskjöld was initially dubious about Pearson and Dulles’ peacekeeping proposal.72 However, repeated meetings with the Canadian diplomat, in addition to the confirmation of US support, buoyed the secretary-general. The UN mission was designed to facilitate not only a ceasefire between combatants, but also the withdrawal of invading forces. This revealing, if brief, moment of concern and anxiety for the organisation’s future role within the international community has been lost from the UN’s official narrative of the ‘first peacekeeping mission’ in order to reinstate the secretary-general as a diplomatic hero during the Suez Crisis. However, this moment represents a significant period of self-reflection within the young organisation. The UN staff’s functional and diplomatic reliance on its member-states, particularly the permanent members, was highlighted; if the states did not comply with the UN Charter, what power did the organisation have to call them to account? This crisis of confidence within the UN Secretariat in the aftermath of the Anglo-French invasion served to intensify Hammarskjöld’s perception of his role as protector of the Charter. Hammarskjöld was reinvigorated by the expanded mandate represented by the draft peacekeeping proposal. Arthur Lall, Ambassador for India to the UN, described Hammarskjöld

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70 UN Doc, A/PV.600, ‘600th Plenary Meeting’ General Assembly, 28 November 1956, p. 397.
71 Ibid., p. 398.
as ‘[seeming] to feel that he was on a superior plain, that he was appointed by God to resolve this crisis’.

The authorisation of the force was complicated by the diplomatic hurdles of the Security Council procedures. The structure of the Council prioritised the protection of permanent members’ interests over those of all other member-states through the permanent members’ veto. Concerns about the future impotence of the Security Council in the context of permanent member abuses had been voiced by representatives at Dumbarton Oaks, who warned that the international community could find itself echoing the powerlessness of the League of Nations in the face of German and Japanese aggression in the 1930s. Britain and France’s use of their veto against Security Council resolutions calling for their withdrawal from Egyptian territory prevented the acceptance of any resolutions on the Suez question within the UN’s primary forum, which failed to implement a ceasefire in Egypt.

However, the obvious bias of permanent members of the Security Council in the resolution vote ignited latent condemnations of the permanent member veto from the Afro-Asian bloc. Victor Andrés Belaunde, Peruvian representative to the UN, demanded in the Security Council that the organisation complied with its responsibility to collective security and ‘peaceful measures’, to avoid being paralysed by the veto(s). Belaunde was one of many Afro-Asian representatives who supported the use of the ‘Uniting for Peace’ resolution (377A) in General Assembly in order to resolve the Suez Crisis. ‘Uniting for Peace’ was a procedure put in place on 3rd November 1950 by the US as a means of circumventing USSR vetoes during the Korean war. The General Assembly was authorised to consider instances of international peace and security – and make recommendations – if unanimity between the permanent members in the Security Council was unachievable. Thus, the processes established during the Korean War served to guide the development of UNEF.

The Uniting the Peace resolution was used in 1956 as a result of procedural frustration by member-states. By the 1950s, it was becoming clear that the frameworks for the acceptance of resolutions within the Security Council had been formed without contingency for postwar divisions between the permanent members. It was only through support for the US-led Uniting

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74 The permanent members of the Security Council were the USA, Britain, France, China (PRC), and the Soviet Union.
for Peace resolution that the British-French-Israeli invaders were prevented from holding the entire legislative process to ransom through the procedural legacies of postwar victory.80

The discussions moved from the Security Council to the General Assembly, shifting the power dynamic between permanent members and non-permanent member-states. In the General Assembly emergency sessions on the Suez Crisis in early November 1956, the peacekeeping mission was characterised by representatives within the Afro-Asian bloc as a functional requirement to hold permanent members or major powers to account.81 Internal telegrams within the Foreign Office between the UK Mission to the UN and government offices in London demonstrate that these emergency sessions in the General Assembly were hostile environments for British and French representatives. British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd commiserated with a British diplomat and representative to the UN writing:

I know that the two Emergency Special Sessions of the General Assembly must have been a more gruelling time than any which the Delegation has had to face, and your task must have been all the more difficult because of the position of isolation and hostility in which we found ourselves.82

Thus, the deployment of the Uniting for Peace resolution against British and French governments demonstrated a growing assertiveness in the Afro-Asian bloc. The application of the ‘Uniting for Peace’ legislation shaped the post-colonial accountability mechanisms available within UN forums and represented a rejection of the procedural protections traditionally afforded to permanent member-states. UNEF’s construction was the result of diplomatic shrewdness on the part of the Afro-Asian bloc and the US to protect the democratic principles underlined within the UN Charter and its values of non-aggression. The member-states’ criticism of the Security Council veto and use of the Uniting for Peace legislation, in response to the Suez Crisis, challenged the foundational power hierarchies within the organisation and shifted diplomatic power away from permanent member-state hegemony.

**Constructing an international force**

Acceptance of the ‘Uniting for Peace’ resolution by the international community restored Hammarskjöld’s reputation and strengthened his position. The practicality of recruiting national

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80 The procedural circumvention of the Security Council permanent member’s veto became an increasing cause of concern for the Soviet Union, the member-state that the Uniting for Peace resolution was initially constructed to restrict. The Soviet Union continued to question the legitimacy of the UNEF due to its authorisation in the General Assembly under the Uniting for Peace resolution and refused to pay for the ‘illegally authorised’ forces. US DoS, ‘The United Nations Financing and Peacekeeping Problems’, SC 00680/65A, 23rd July 1965.


contingents became a delicate point of diplomatic negotiation. For the secretary-general, the price of expanding the functions of the UN was navigating existing diplomatic practices and customary law. Additionally, Hammarskjöld had to ensure that the initial donations were sufficient for the foreseeable length of the mission. The Force did not require regular resolution renewals in the General Assembly, unlike future missions. Therefore, the burden was on the practical needs for the delivery of the mission rather than on diplomatic lobbying. Hammarskjöld’s advisor, Brian Urquhart recalled that, ‘[UNEF] had no time limit, and all that had to be done was once a year to report on it to the General Assembly. But it didn't have to be renewed or anything, so the bureaucratic end of it was much easier, too’. The unprecedented nature of the mission allowed Hammarskjöld to experiment and adapt to legal, diplomatic, and operational hurdles. Hammarskjöld saw UNEF as a blueprint from which he could formulate future peacekeeping missions: ‘I would rather see [UNEF] as a kind of experimental prototype from which we learn a great deal and which, I hope, will make it easier at a later stage to renew the discussion and reach results concerning a United Nations force as a formal part of our equipment’.84

Hammarskjöld wanted to act quickly to counter the rumours circulated by the British government that Nasser was planning on inviting the Soviets to Egypt if the violence persisted.85 Nasser had allegedly warned Hammarskjöld that he ‘had not much confidence in the organisation’ but was reluctant to invite the Soviets to defend Egyptian territory as this would likely start ‘world war three’ and so his options were limited to trusting UNEF.86 Regardless, the UN leadership remained anxious about the international repercussions in the region if the ceasefire was not installed by December. Thus, the conflict context on the ground and its strategic importance for global trade encouraged Hammarskjöld to deploy the mission as soon as possible.

One of Hammarskjöld’s first decisions was his choice of UNEF Force Commander: Canadian officer, General “Tommy” Burns’. In early-November, Murray recalls Hammarskjöld’s eagerness to confirm his appointment, ‘because it would show both the British and the French, who, don’t forget, were still sailing down the [Mediterranean] toward the Canal zone, that the UN meant business – that they were going to get that force in there as smartly as they could’.87 Burns had held the position of Chief of Staff for UNTSO for two years when he was recruited by Hammarskjöld. Michael Carroll describes Burns’s recruitment as ‘both appreciated and

83 Urquhart, ‘Interview transcript’, p. 22.
84 UNA, S-0370-0051-05, ‘Press Conference with Dag Hammarskjöld, Note 1571 of 4 April 1957, cont.’
86 Ibid.
respected’ by local observers in the Middle East due to the General’s past involvement in local mediation.\(^{88}\) The secretary-general authorised Burns’s appointment overnight following the authorisation of the General Assembly resolution, demonstrating the immediacy of Hammarskjöld’s decision-making.

Burns’s past experience in the Canadian military was not without controversy, however, and there were two efforts by superior British and Canadian officers to oust him for his poor leadership during the Second World War.\(^{89}\) Burns has been described, in military histories of the Second World War, as having a ‘notoriously brusque and anti-social manner with subordinates’.\(^{90}\) He was relieved of his command after a second complaint in October 1944, reduced in rank to major-general, and relegated to ‘unimportant rear area positions’.\(^{91}\) However, Burns’s humiliation in 1944 has been reviewed by Lt. Will Lofgren, who argued that Burns’s operational skill on the front line in Italy made him ‘one of the most successful Canadian corps commanders in the entire Second World War’ and that it was others’ affront to his atypical leadership style and interpersonal skills that caused him to be ‘pilloried’.\(^{92}\) Similarly, Douglas Delaney has argued for Burns’s academic brilliance and military skill but acknowledged that Burns’s ‘uncanny knack for making everyone around him uncomfortable’ stunted the General’s career.\(^{93}\) Thus, his second life as a UN commander was an opportunity for Burns to regain his rank of lieutenant-general and reassert himself in a leadership position unprejudiced by past criticism.

\(^{88}\) Carroll, *Pearson’s Peacekeepers*, p. 34.
\(^{91}\) Ibid, p. 133.
Once Hammarskjöld had recruited Burns, he was able to focus on diplomatically sensitive decisions such as choosing which nations would participate in the mission. The construction of the UN Force was inherently tied to the national/international structures of the UN organs, agencies, and forums. The Force was an alliance of distinct national battalions rather than an international mix of troops (as was deployed to Korea) which enabled troops to operate alongside those similarly trained to them, a rupture from the original cosmopolitan design. The choice of national battalions was a decision that Hammarskjöld was keen to protect from political aspersions. Recalling the cosmopolitan vision of the UN founders, UN leadership required UNEF troops to be agile in swapping between their national and international allegiances whilst ensuring that neither became either dilute or dominant. The UNEF troops ultimately were under the authority of Commander Burns whilst remaining within their national battalions.

Hammarskjöld attempted to pre-empt accusations that the mission perpetrated imperial interests in the Suez region or was a ‘face-saving’ exercise by absorbing the existing invading forces on the ground. Hammarskjöld announced that there would be no troops deployed from permanent member-states to UNEF and that the final decision on UNEF recruitment would be

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95 This accusation has been made by several scholars, including: M. Cohen, ‘The Demise of UNEF’, *International Journal*, Vol. 23:1 (1968), pp. 18-51.
for himself and the Force Commander.\textsuperscript{96} In November 1956, Hammarskjöld recognised that amalgamating the invading British and French troops into UNEF would be militarily unviable and politically unpopular. Bunche recorded Indian representative Arthur Lall arguing at an Advisory Committee meeting that it was, ‘not likely that any Asian forces will participate [in UNEF] if Anglo-French forces are included – they must be treated as untouchables’.\textsuperscript{97}

The exclusion of permanent member-states from the mission was a factor in the transition of power away from P5 hegemony towards the increased diplomatic weight of middle powers.\textsuperscript{98} This shift was linked with the UN leadership’s assumption that these nations would not complicate the mission with imperial or Cold War politics, as the major powers had during this period. UNEF presented an early opportunity to associate their nation with a UN mission and benefit from that mission’s diplomatic credentials. Middle power nations, such as Canada, India, and Indonesia, acknowledged the diplomatic influence this provided for their governments in the context of a rapidly transforming international community. Twenty-one nations offered to donate military contingents to UNEF ‘without any prompting’, seemingly a pleasant surprise to Ralph Bunche, who commented that it was the ‘most popular army ever’.\textsuperscript{99}

Hammarskjöld constructed an international Advisory Committee to determine which nationalities should be deployed to the UNEF mission, but the Committee itself triggered diplomatic hurdles. It was authorised on 7\textsuperscript{th} November 1956 to:

\begin{quote}
 undertake the development of those aspects of the planning for the Force and its operation not already dealt with by the General Assembly and which do not fall within the area of the direct responsibility of the Chief of Command [Burns].\textsuperscript{100}
\end{quote}

The creation of a Committee permitted the secretary-general to delegate accountability and responsibility if future operations provoked regional, or international, criticism. The Committee predominantly included Afro-Asian and South American countries: Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Colombia, Norway, and Pakistan were the first added. India was a late addition following

\textsuperscript{96} Specifically, the resolution, ‘Authorizes the Chief of the Command immediately to recruit, from the observer corps of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, a limited number of officers who shall be nationals of countries other than those having permanent membership in the Security Council, and further authorizes him, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to undertake the recruitment directly, from various Member States other than the permanent members of the Security Council, of the additional number of officers needed’; UN Doc, A/RES/1000 (ES – 1), ‘Resolution 1000’, 5 November 1956.

\textsuperscript{97} UNA, S-0370-0028-08, ‘Bunche notes on UNEF Advisory Committee Meeting’, undated.


\textsuperscript{99} BNA, FO 371/118873/JE.1074/1, ‘Report of talk with Dr Bunche, 14 November 1956’.

\textsuperscript{100} UN Doc, A/RES/1001 (ES-1), ‘Resolution 1001’, 7 November 1956.
criticism of the mission as an imperialistic trick designed to indoctrinate the Afro-Asian nations from Krishna Menon, Indian Permanent Representative to the UN.\textsuperscript{101}

Fig. 8. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The streets were lined with supporters as the Brazilian contingent paraded along Avenida Rio Branco on its way to the pier, indicating the public support for the mission. © UN Archives\textsuperscript{102}

However, recognizing that he could police this ‘trap’ from the inside, Menon accepted a seat on the Committee and offered Indian battalions to the mission.\textsuperscript{103} He later became one of its most vocal supporters and argued that UN peacekeeping was a practical furtherance of the Charter’s principles:\textsuperscript{104} a blossoming of UN functions.\textsuperscript{105} Middle powers associated with the Warsaw Pact were excluded from the Committee, illustrating the Cold War biases present in the UN Secretariat. The UN leadership rejected a Czechoslovakian representative on the Committee on the grounds that, ‘nobody wanted the east bloc dabbling in all this business’.\textsuperscript{106} The Committee discussions prepared national representatives for the procedural, principled and practical constraints to be expected on the ground. As Hammarskjöld commented in the minutes of one UNEF Committee meeting, ‘I trust that you will keep in touch with us and help us, because we certainly want to run this as team-wise [sic] as possible’.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{101} Murray, ‘Interview transcript’, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{102} UNA, S-1065-0002-01, ‘UNEF – Brazilian Contingent’, 11 January 1957.
\textsuperscript{104} UN Doc, A/PV.703, ‘703rd Plenary Meeting’, General Assembly, 8 November 1957, p. 324, para. 139.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, p. 318, para. 75.
\textsuperscript{106} Murray, ‘Interview transcript’, p. 49.
It was the executive role of the secretary-general to negotiate and vet the suggested contingents and leadership officers once the Committee representatives had provided their opinions. However, Hammarskjöld and Bunche had to ensure that they did not overly dominate the process, nor appear as if they were letting Nasser design UNEF. UNEF was only permitted in Egyptian territory due to Nasser’s government’s consent but the UN leadership had to consider Nasser’s requests in the context of an international audience.\(^{108}\) In a meeting with the staff of the UK Mission to the UN and the British Secretary of State, Hammarskjöld commented that, ‘The Egyptians still claim the right to refuse individual contingents, but [Hammarskjöld] was quite firm that his is the determining authority, though he can take account of Egyptian views’.\(^{109}\) Nasser was reported to have asked Hammarskjöld not to accept the contingents offered by Pakistan and Iran, indicating that regional tensions and alliances were reflected in the design of the Force.\(^{110}\) The leak of Nasser’s preferences had diplomatic ramifications for the Egyptian government, and it was quick to deny such reports. The British Embassy in Iran reported that the Egyptian government argued that, ‘Iran was such a friendly power that they would prefer to not have an Iranian contingent’.\(^{111}\) The Egyptian Embassy also rejected press reports that they had a ‘ban’ on Pakistan troops being included in UNEF, stating that, ‘Pakistan was not one of the countries suggested by the Secretary General of the United Nations to participate.’\(^{112}\) Despite Egyptian representatives addressing these reports, Iran and Pakistan did not contribute contingents to the 1956 UNEF mission. This wrangling indicates the level of detail and concern applied to UNEF’s construction and the relevance of regional politics to the middle powers’ attainment of increased geopolitical power within the UN.

The Egyptian government was also hesitant about Canadian involvement in the Force due to its NATO affiliations with the invading forces.\(^{113}\) Nasser was keen to ensure that UNEF troops did not ‘take over’ from the Anglo-French invasion and reportedly preferred the Canadian contribution to the mission to begin on restricted terms.\(^{114}\) Canadian troops were eventually deployed to UNEF air force and civilian operations. However, the concerning dearth of civilian staff submissions, required for the management and support of the mission on the

\(^{108}\) UNEF only patrolled on the Egyptian side of the demarcation line as it was refused access by the Israeli government despite efforts by Bunche to engage with the Israelis about this issue: ‘therefore, the Force is found only on the Egyptian side’: UNA, S-0316-0012-06, ‘Letter from Bunche to Secretary-General’, 6 August 1957.


ground presented an opening for the Canadian military. As UNEF logistical support was provided by the US, and the Canadian army used the same systems, Hammarskjöld and Burns determined that the Canadians would provide ‘housekeeping’ for the mission. Participating in the UNEF mission also gave Canada an opportunity to call the ‘major powers’ to account for their violation of international law during the Suez Crisis. In a press conference, Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, commented:

St Laurent: I have been scandalised more than once by the attitude of the larger powers, the big powers as we call them, who have all too frequently treated the Charter of the United Nations as an instrument with which to regiment smaller nations and as an instrument which did not have to be considered when their own so-called vital interests were at state. I have been told, with respect to the veto, that if the Russians had not insisted upon it the United States and the United Kingdom would have insisted on it, because they could not allow this crowd of smaller nations to deal decisively with questions which concerned their vital interests.

Reporter: Why should they?

St Laurent: Because the members of the smaller nations are human beings just as are their people; because the era when the supermen of Europe could govern the whole world has and is coming pretty close to an end.

The UNEF ‘housekeeping’ role placed the Canadians at the centre of the mission and empowered this middle power nation to expand its operational position within the international community and build on Pearson’s diplomatic reputation.

Within a fortnight of the Suez invasion, mid-November 1956, Bunche announced that the UNEF had been successfully constructed, with, ‘contingents so far accepted [totalling] 4,278. In addition to the Canadians [of 1,200] this is made up as follows: Colombians 550, Indians 800, Swedes 300, Norwegians 200, Danes 350, Finns 250, Yugoslavs 700’, with Indonesian and Brazilian contingents also added to the initial deployment over the next fortnight. The inclusion of the Yugoslav contingent did not raise any objections within the UN leadership due to the nation’s postwar split from Stalin and founding role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) under leader, Josip Tito. The UN airlifted over two thousand UNEF troops from

116 Ibid.
Naples into the Suez Canal area by December 1st 1956. Despite the diplomatic hurdles involved in the design of the Force, Hammarskjöld deployed the mission in under a month from the adoption of the Uniting for Peace resolution.\(^{120}\)

\[\text{Fig. 9. Hand-drawn bar chart of contributing countries attached as Annex 5 to official UN internal report on ‘UNEF build up’ © UN Archives}\^{121}\]

The successful construction of the mission, and its popularity within the General Assembly, encouraged the British Secretary of State, Selwyn Lloyd, to characterise the British invasion as foundational to UNEF’s development. On 14\(^{th}\) November, Pierson Dixon, leader of the UK Mission to the UN, defended the British invasion to American UN Ambassador Lodge and argued that Britain was acting in self-defence during the invasion of Egyptian territory.\(^{122}\) Dixon reported his meeting to his colleagues in the Foreign Office, recording:

\[\text{[Lodge] spoke of the shock which our action had been and the pain which it had caused him. We had been guilty of aggression and what we had done was indefensible. I said that I did not agree with him at all. We had acted to stop a wider conflagration. We had done so quickly because otherwise Syria and Jordan would have been in the war before we knew where we were. Our intention to protect our national interests in the Canal area was, in my view, legitimate self-defence…}\^{123}\]

\(^{120}\) BNA, FO 371/118878/JE.1074/127 ‘Proposed Statement to the Press by Secretary-General’, 28 November 1956.


\(^{123}\) Ibid.
Lodge’s response indicates he was not persuaded on this point: ‘[He] really had no answer to that argument’. Additionally, repeated condemnations by the Afro-Asian bloc nations throughout November, including an adopted General Assembly resolution which directly called upon the invading forces to withdraw behind the 1949 Armistice Lines, frustrated the Foreign Office diplomats in London and New York. Lloyd and Dixon felt that this resolution crystalized an unfair characterisation of British operations in Egypt. Foreign Office documents described the Afro-Asian resolution as impractical and a deliberate move by anti-imperialists within the General Assembly.

This defensive position was a central strategy of British post-Suez international communications as the popularity of the UNEF mission became an unavoidable geopolitical reality. Lloyd made the same argument in the General Assembly on 23rd November 1956. He insisted on the beneficial consequences of the conflict instigated by the Anglo-French-Israeli forces. He alleged that the invasion was undertaken with a humanitarian impulse to prevent the spread of hostilities following the earlier Israeli operations: that Britain ‘wished to put, as rapidly as possible, a protective shield between combatants’ through their invasion. Lloyd cast the consequences of the invasion (i.e. the construction of the UNEF mission) as a direct result of the British invasion. Thus, he asserted that any criticism of British actions during the Suez Crisis, and ‘out of the painful discussions regarding them’, were diluted and justified by the development of UNEF. Lloyd bestowed the British invasion with the humanitarian and security credentials of a peacekeeping mission by minimising its violence and insisting that the ends justified the means. Indeed, he asserted that the British government would be responsible for the restoration of peace in the Middle East following the Suez Crisis:

We believe that we have stopped a small war spreading into a larger war. We believe that we have created the conditions under which a United Nations force is to be introduced into this troubled area to establish and maintain peace. We believe that thereby we have given this Assembly, and the world, another opportunity to settle the problems of the area. We believe that we brought matters to a head, to a crisis, and we have

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124 Ibid.
125 Reference is to a draft resolution cosponsored by 20 Afro-Asian nations, which was circulated to members of the General Assembly on 22nd November (U.N. doc. A/3385) This draft resolution reiterated previous calls to Great Britain, France, and Israel to comply with U.N. resolutions requiring withdrawal from occupied territories. This draft resolution was then accepted and published as: UN Doc, A/RES/1120 (XI), ‘Resolution 1120’, General Assembly, 24 November 1956.
127 Ibid.
cast down a challenge to world statesmanship of this Assembly to achieve results. We believe that there is in this a great test for the United Nations and on the powers upon whose continued support the United Nations ultimately depends.  

Lloyd’s arrogant position was a blatant attempt to reassert Britain’s international reputation as a trustworthy ‘major power’ with a strategic motivation rooted in political and moral supremacy. This defence and its expectation that the international audience would accept it was a legacy of colonial bravado and belief in British righteousness in its foreign policy.

In the same speech, Lloyd attempted to assign Britain’s invading troops an international policing role. He argued that, as a precaution, British troops would remain on the ground until the UK government deemed that the UNEF mission staff are ‘effective and competent to discharge the tasks’ as they did not want UNEF to ‘be laughed at’. Lloyd concluded by reminding the UN that the British government was indulging in an ‘act of faith’ in the mission, the secretary-general, and the organisation’s bureaucracy as a whole. This was a poorly concealed attempt to pre-emptively shift responsibility for future instability in the Middle East towards the Force leadership rather than the invaders. France did not speak in this session, but the Israeli representative Abba Eban concluded the meeting by reiterating his defence of tripartite aggression in Sinai and Gaza. He argued that Egypt had endangered Israeli citizens for the past eight years and ‘Israel had arisen to defend its life and its future against the perils threatening its existence from every side’. Thus, similar to the British, Israel had no intention of displaying regret for its invasion of the Suez canal.

Rebuttal of Lloyd’s argument dominated the next day in the General Assembly with many nations, including Syria, Poland, and Iraq, ridiculing the idea that the invading forces should evaluate the competence of the UN mission before withdrawing. Krishna Menon challenged Lloyd’s confidence, rationale, and pseudo-legal justifications for the British invasion: ‘I do not see any provision in the Charter indicating that it is given to one nation to use armed might in the defence of any principles that are embodied in the Charter’. Menon suggested that the history of colonial violence across the Global South had desensitised populations to European violations of sovereignty and that the Suez Crisis could not be divorced from these
longstanding imperial practices. He stated that, ‘it has almost become part of the racial memory of men to regard these aggression as though they were less sinful, less criminal, less against the Charter of the United Nations, than any other’.138 Defending the authority of the UN mission and deriding the arrogance of the British government’s attempt to recast their invading forces as supervising peacekeepers, Menon emphasised that ‘France and the United Kingdom have no right to tell us: “We will decide, when your forces come in, whether they are big enough and whether they can take over”’.139

However, these rebuttals made little difference to the confidence of the British government in their internal communications and their narrative of the crisis. Lloyd and Dixon’s conceptions of Britain’s involvement in the ‘creation’ of the UNEF mission and, more broadly, their humanitarian efforts to have, ‘stopped a small war which might quickly have spread into a major war’ appeared unshaken.140 The Security Council veto and materiel available from past British occupation permitted the Anglo-French-Israeli forces to retain the military upper-hand in the region, despite the transformative shifts within the international community. The timeline of their withdrawal remained their own until the UNEF deployment challenged their presence directly on the ground.

Once on the ground, the UNEF leadership realised that the Force was ill-resourced and poorly prepared to install a ceasefire in the region. British representatives offered technical and administrative support, particularly for clearing the canal of scuttled vessels, during the early months of UNEF’s operations through talks with Ralph Bunche and his UN office to balance out UNEF’s deficit.141 The Force thus perpetuated the presence of the invading personnel in Sinai and Gaza. Dixon wrote to the Foreign Office in London to discuss their involvement in transferring technical equipment ‘such as transport, food stocks and other stores’, from their invading position in Port Said to UNEF troops once they arrived.142 The next week, Bunche delivered a ‘shopping list’ to Dixon confirming the ‘order’ of:

1) Vehicles for a Norwegian medical company; 2) Vehicles for the Indian infantry battalion. They [Bunche’s office] understood that the scale of equipment should be similar to that of a British infantry battalion. 3. POL [petroleum, oils and lubricants], medical supplies and food.143

138 Ibid., p. 303.
139 Ibid., p. 305.
The Force’s reliance on British technical support and resources legitimised British diplomats’ efforts to insert their government in the narrative of UNEF and benefit from the diplomatic credentials of association with the mission, despite their official exclusion from providing a military contingent donation.

Hammarskjöld recognised that the UN needed to maintain a civil relationship with the British government, especially whilst they were still occupying the region. In December 1956, Hammarskjöld covertly requested that the UK Mission influence the Israelis to keep a portion of their invading troops in the Gaza region due to the refugees residing there. A memo from the UK Mission to the Foreign Office reported that:

Legally, of course, the Israelis were under an Assembly injunction to withdraw completely behind the armistice lines. But Hammarskjöld had privately indicated that the last thing he wanted to see was an early Israel evacuation from Gaza, which would leave all the refugees there with no adequate administration.  

The UN leadership’s use of withdrawing, or supposedly withdrawing, invading troops in the early months of a new mission prioritised organisational concerns above the psychological violence of an occupying force and paved the way for future missions’ reliance on ex-colonial powers for technical and administrative support.

**The Sand Dune: Developing a ‘peacekeeper’ identity on the ground**

By 1st December 1956, UNEF had installed a sizable military presence along the Canal region and the demarcation line(s) (ADL or DL) and extending across the disputed territories of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza strip. ‘Fluttering blue flags, indicating UN control’ were ‘dotted all along the Line’, with troops placing them ‘as far as they eye can see’, physically indicating the UN Force’s presence on the ground to the local population and remaining belligerents.\(^\text{145}\) Once on the ground, the mission staff and troops began to craft, exchange, and project their own conception(s) of UNEF and what it meant to be an international ‘peacekeeper’, building on the cosmopolitan ideals encouraged by the spirit of the UN Charter. Maintaining a working relationship with the Egyptian government proved difficult for UN staff, who had been instructed by UN leadership to remain suspicious of Egyptian politicians. Bunche wrote to General Burns in early 1957 to remind him to rely on information solely from other UN agencies rather than Egyptian sources: ‘I consider it inadvisable [Bunche’s emphasis] to approach Gaza

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\(^{144}\) BNA, FO 371/118884/JE.1074/216 ‘Memo from United Kingdom Delegation to the UN to Foreign Office’, 8 December 1956.

Egyptians on questions. Suggest reliance on UNRWA and UNEF sources only.\(^\text{146}\) Thus, the Force bureaucracy became insular and disconnected from the Egyptian government in its authority over Sinai and Gaza, influencing the peacekeeping staff’s conceptions of the region, the local population, and each other.

The UN leadership emphasised that the UNEF troops were to be held to higher moral and humanitarian standards than when they were deployed under their own nations’ authority. The mission leaders expected the troops to represent the ideals of the UN and exposed the peacekeepers to saviour-complex rhetoric from the mission’s origin. Once deployed, Hammarskjöld broadcast a message to the new UNEF troops, outlining:

> You are the frontline of a moral force which extends around the world, and you have behind you the support of millions everywhere. Much will depend upon the example that this force sets. Your success can have profound effect for good, not only in the present emergency, but on future prospects for building a world order of which we may all one day be truly proud.\(^\text{147}\)

Similarly, General Burns, asserted:

> We are not a great military force but we are a symbol of a moral force – the force embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of which we have helped to make effective in this place. Perhaps history will cite our force as the first effective use of the armed forces of many nations to implement the principles of non-aggression which all member nations of the UN are bound to by their adherence to the Charter. If this sort of peace by using armed forces continues, grows and becomes more effective, then the whole human race will have benefited.\(^\text{148}\)

UN leadership rhetoric entrenched this a narrative of a ‘chosen’ and morally-superior Force within UNEF and then projected it to the international audience.

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\(^{146}\) UNA, S-0316-0009-23, ‘Outgoing code from Bunche to Burns, GA-34’, 1 April 1957.  
\(^{147}\) UNA, S-0313-0002-12, ‘UN Pamphlet on UNEF’, 1 March 1957, p. 17.  
The scale of the deployment across such great distances led to the production of a UNEF newsletter, intended to foster community and provide updates for troops when isolated on their patrols. *The Sand Dune* was a weekly magazine established for deployed soldiers, often patrolling far from UNEF base camps and each other. The UNEF Public Information Office published and distributed the first edition on February 26th 1957 from the UNEF headquarters in Abu Suweir, an airbase to the west of the Suez Canal (see Figure 11.). The magazine relied heavily on contributions and letters from UNEF troops for content, thus providing insight into

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the dynamic relationships between troops and national battalions. The collegial tone of the magazine was fostered by jokes littering the pages and stories of masculine camaraderie in the field. It was produced primarily to entertain the thousands of men, trained soldiers, deployed across the Sinai Peninsula. It started with an exceptionally low budget and was characterised by cartoons and comics drawn in an unrefined style, despite its publication by the UNEF public information office. Regular features included UN News, fact sections on the different national battalions deployed, operational updates, letters of thanks from people around the world for their ‘preservation of peace’, 150 and ‘personalities’- a section where the previous accomplishments of leadership figures are described. This collegial effort was emphasised by the first editor, Major V Longer, an Indian soldier, who stated that the magazine, ‘recorded the history [of UNEF’s deployment]… as seen from the inside. It has presented a picture of the various national contingents, of the jobs they are doing on the ADL and of the countries from which they have come. It has become a “family magazine” and perhaps like the blue berets and helmet liners has contributed something to a sense of unity in the force’. 151

Fig. 11. Map showing Abu Suweir, 1957 © Indonesian Ministry of Information and the Information Department of the Indonesian Army

The UNEF troops were continually encouraged to engage with The Sand Dune and send in their opinions so the publication could adapt to the soldiers’ needs and requests. In response,

UNEF troops often wrote in to compliment or correct various features, indicating its widespread reach and their desire to curate the magazine for their needs. One of the Yugoslav troops sent in a note to the Editor commenting that the language barrier of *The Sand Dune* was no longer an issue for his battalion’s enjoyment and education:

> The paper “Sand Dune” is read very much by all the members of our battalion and they like it. We have taken all necessary measures that this our common paper is accessible to all our soldiers. The paper is therefore being translated into our language, and this enables each member of our battalion to become familiar with the efforts and life of their friends from other contingents and at the same time they learn much about the countries which have sent their contingents to take part in UNEF.¹⁵²

The magazine was, thus, a central, accessible, and tailored space for the mission troops to promote and reinforce the image of the peacekeeping mission as a successful, humanitarian, and transnational operation. By 28th March 1957, the UN headquarters in New York increased their order of editions from to six eight copies, with the extra magazines ‘being distributed (1) to the library and (2) to the Secretariat News’ indicating the transnational reach of the troops’ curated experiences from the field.¹⁵³

The self-published nature of the magazine revealed the political and ideological prejudices of the troops through their portrayal of and engagement with the local population and territory. Stereotypical and imperial beliefs about the region were dominant in the magazine’s descriptions of UNEF troops’ operations. Edward Said’s seminal work on European ‘invention’ of the Orient revealed the variety of practical and rhetorical tools utilised by western actors in their interactions and descriptions and conceptions of colonised populations, specifically in the Middle East.¹⁵⁴ Said argued that an Orientalist perspective encouraged western visitors to exaggerate the differences between their home country and the Arab-Asiatic region, distorting and homogenising their conceptions of the local population to assumed ‘the Orient’s difference with its weakness’.¹⁵⁵ *The Sand Dune’s* narrative of the troops’ experiences in the Middle East perpetuated colonial European imaginations of the region as ‘timeless’, simultaneously ‘exotic’ and ‘primitive’. Although the troops were constructed from a range of middle power nations, the very act of intervention authorised an ‘othering’ of the host population. The troops reproduced ‘the Orient’, as they attempted to communicate their intervention through the magazine, by, ‘making statements about it, authorising views, of it, describing it, but teaching it, settling it,

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¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 204.
ruling over it…”156 Thus, the symbolism and language used by the troops within *The Sand Dune*, as they patrolled the region, reproduced and legitimised colonial imaginaries of the post-colonial Middle East within the peacekeeping community.

The publication encouraged the UNEF soldiers to conceive of the peacekeeping context through an Orientalist lens of Egyptian and Lebanese culture which had been long popularised through colonial ethnographic publications,157 archaeological excavations,158 and tourist literature of the region.159 The magazine legitimised Orientalist fantasies of Ancient Egypt and ‘exoticised’ the shared peacekeeping experience. For example, in an interview with Norwegian doctor, Major Muri, who volunteered ‘to come to Egypt for the love of seeing the Nile, the Pyramids, the [Sphinx] and the ancient mysteries of Luxor. To him it was an exciting experience…’160 Magazine columns frequently referred to ancient historical monuments, ‘exotic’ landscapes, connecting the region’s past with their present operations. As Ali Behdad argues, the Orientalist’s melancholic ‘desire’ for a past paradise is challenged by ‘the emptiness of the signifieds in the subject’s encounter with the real… The subject’s desire of the Orient begins to take shape in the gap between the “reality” of the Orient emerging before him from dust and dream and the phantasm of the Orient conveyed to him through the symbolic field of the orientalist intertext’.161 Behdad articulates the paradoxical challenge for the Orientalist when put in contact with the object of ‘desire or fantasy’, like the UNEF troops, whose pre-conflict fantasies of the region were exaggerated through troops’ letters and articles published in *The Sand Dune*.

Debbie Lisle conceives of this dynamic as a ‘tourist lens’ and has examined its effect on troops deployed to conflict contexts in foreign spaces. She argues the institutionalisation of recreation and relaxation on the front line, established during the First World War, entrenched ‘tourist sensibilities’ in the trenches as the troops had longer periods to ‘relax’.162 Lisle posits that pre-conflict, ‘dispositions of leisure and travel periodically reorient fighting forces toward foreign battlefields and enemy territory’, which serve to, ‘[frame] their off-duty experiences through a familiar prewar tourist gaze’.163 Improvements to communications technology allowed troops to

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156 Ibid., p. 3.
163 Ibid., p. 71.
report back home their experiences and, thus, view their environment through a tourist framework as they sought to best translate their foreign surroundings to their friends and family, positioning themselves as external to the environment. The troops held a liminal mindset as they were simultaneously part of and separate from the field; their pre-conflict or pre-war expectations and fantasies of the region clashing with the realities of deployment to a conflict zone or battlefield. Orientalist fantasies required the production of encounters and interactions in order for an ‘authentic’ experience of Egyptian or Lebanese culture for UNEF troops. United in their Orientalist expectations for the mission, the troops reconstructed aspects of their fantasies of the region for one another through The Sand Dune and recreational activities, such as belly-dancing, in order to fulfil their, and their families’, fantasies of the region and population.

Fig. 12. An early edition of The Sand Dune header with camel and sunset cartoons © UN Archives

The troops’ geographic descriptions of the landscape, published in The Sand Dune, were integral to troops’ descriptions of patrols, invoking ‘othering’ comparisons to their homelands. Paradoxically, Sinai was described as both a barren desert and an exotic Arab fantasy depending on whether the magazine was intending on projecting the Force as weathering a harsh landscape, or enjoying the opportunity to travel to such a new environment. The title of the magazine, for example, encouraged an exoticisation of the landscape and revealed the troops’ close relationship with the sand and animals, in particular camels, which were both sources of excitement and frustration. The troops reflected on the ‘primitive’ host country: ‘Looking at the rolling downs, the fertile emerald fields and undulating countryside – now polluted with mines and the ravages of war – nothing much seems to have changed from the days of the Bible. The Shepherds and the sheep still emphasise the idyllic, pastoral peace; the donkey is still a convenient mode of conveyance; and Bedouins travel miles and miles of sandy tracks either on

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164 Ibid., p. 73.
166 A particularly poetic instance of this martyrning projection: ‘There is a feel about the desert which only those who trod the soft sands know. The Sun beats pitilessly, sand particles sparkle in the light, the sand laden wind cuts into your flesh like sharp needle points. There is an eternal silence and loneliness accentuated by howling winds and endless contours of sand’: BL, U.N.A.466., UN Public Information Office, ‘Sand Dune: The UNEF Weekly’, ed. 11, 8 May 1957, p. 1.
foot or on Camel back’.

In another instance within this edition, the author combines ancient myths with the territory as if they were real events imbuing the environment with a greater sense of Orientalist fantasy: ‘Heavy vehicles, jeeps, cars and nail-studded boots of UNEF soldiers roll and tread on streets and sands through mud villages and cities replete with Biblical history. Little does one realise that he may be on the very spot where Samson lost his strength…’ These ‘exotic’ conceptions of the landscape led to reports of troops mailing grains of sand from Sinai as souvenirs to their families at home, indicating the physical importance of the landscape to the troops’ Orientalist fantasies of the region.

The magazine’s descriptions of Sinai and a ‘timeless’ desert life demonstrated troop judgement on the modernity and development of the nation and, thus, placed the peacekeepers in, what they perceived, as a superior ‘civilised’ position. For the Scandinavian battalions, in particular, the novelty of the hot landscape was greater than the troops whose home nations had similar climates or conditions, such as those from the Indian and Columbian battalions. This diversity in national experiences led to a piece in The Sand Dune which emphasised the challenge of the desert for the Scandinavian troops, highlighting the transnational range of personnel in UNEF. The piece compared the climate between their Scandinavian home region and Sinai, evolving into poetic analysis of the host country landscape’s inhabitability and undesirability:

There is no snow; no icy sheeted lakes; no forests of spruce and pine; no woods and jungles; no midnight sun. And that is what the Finns are used to. Sheram El Sheikh has bare rocks and sands on which the Sun beats pitilessly. There are big, bleak boulders without any vegetation except a few hardy, gnarled, pigmy shrubs. Lots of rats, many more flies, black and brown scorpions and plenty of sharks in the Gulf of Aqaba which touches the shores of Sheram el Sheikh. It’s hot, very hot for the tall, fair, light-haired, blue-eyed Finnish soldiers.

As part of an effort to exaggerate the sacrifice of the peacekeepers, poetic descriptions of the environment reinforced negative political imaginaries of the Arab world as inferior to the troops’ host countries despite its ancient credentials.

Publishing these perceptions of the region encouraged troops to conceive of UNEF temporary; that they were only visitors to the region. International relations scholars, such as Cynthia Enloe, have drawn attention to the consumptive and objectifying lens of international and national troops to foreign conflict spaces and, in particular, local women.

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169 Ibid.
troops visited Leave Centres in Cairo and Beirut and organised mission trips to belly-dancing performances and bars. These activities were included in UNEF’s budget as Burns considered these recreations as, ‘necessary for the maintenance of morale and continued efficient operation of the Force’. In one instance, a belly-dancer was employed for the farewell celebrations for the Norwegian battalion transfer at the UNEF headquarters in Abu Suweir:

All Norwegian boys whistled, smiled and clapped. With the jiggling of breasts, the supple movements of the belly, the provocative hip flights, the sensual thrusts of arms and legs, appreciative roars [rose] the tent roofs. Only the Norwegian doctors were not happy. Their suspicion [sic] minds were not satisfied. Their intimate knowledge of feminine anatomy was jarred. But what suspicions when there is belly dancing… The belly dancer was an Arab dressed as a woman…

Thus, local men and women became entangled in the heterosexual, hyper-masculine cultural activities and were ‘consumed’ as part of the mission’s ‘welfare’ activities. This particular instance reveals the emasculation of Arab men and the feminisation of the UNEF space. The troops’ gender and participating in UNEF fed into perceptions of superiority and control within the peacekeeping troops. As Enloe writes about such heterosexual activities in conflict zones, “Though he may think of himself as simply bolstering his own manly credentials, his attempts to compensate for his insecure, masculine identity help shape power relations between his country’s military and the society it is supposed to be protecting.”

The Sand Dune was also an important vehicle for the UN’s liberal internationalist project as the mission was an experiment in cosmopolitan operational collaboration. Bunche wrote in a draft booklet about UNEF that despite, ‘differences in language, training methods, these men of UNEF joined together with great efficiency and carried out the task entrusted to them in a spirit that is truly that of the United Nations’. The magazine provided a forum for troops to write in and verify the success of the UN project in practice by crafting an image of peacekeeping missions as a cosmopolitan utopia in its function and design. It contained weekly updates on operational movements and efforts by all the battalions so troops could feel updated whilst deployed in a different region. UNEF hospitals were became transnational spaces and doctors regularly wrote in to comment on the, notably, international character of their wards.

Additionally, the international friendships were a highly popular feature of The Sand Dune magazine with football matches and chess games reported and scores recorded on the back.

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175 Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Bases, p. 7.
pages for those following along from wherever they were stationed.\textsuperscript{178} The Editor encouraged more battalions to create football teams and, as language barriers remained a problem for many of the troops, sport soon provided a means for different nationalities to build relationships during their deployment.\textsuperscript{179} Language problems were also overcome during the socials through the distribution of alcohol: ‘All kinds of drinks were offered and some good speeches were made in all the languages. In spite of the different languages everybody understood each other, even before the drinks!’\textsuperscript{180} Transnational gatherings only helped to cement perceptions within the UNEF that the mission was an ‘authentic’ force, gelling and performing like a traditional national army.

Troops shared the same base camps and patrolled alongside one another leading to cross-cultural interactions and relationships developing, although the battalions remained in their national companies. For example, one Canadian soldier reportedly asked to remain in a position on the DL as he had built a friendship with some Indonesian troops at the same post. \textit{The Sand Dune} reported that, ‘Canadian soldiers living in three desolate outposts in the Sinai with cheery Indonesian soldiers – despite language difficulties – have become good pals [sic]. One Canadian soldier requested that he be left at the outpost because, he said, he was learning Indonesian.’\textsuperscript{181} The battalions were also mobilised in the region due to these relationships as they travelled significant distances across the demilitarised area to play football matches against teams they had yet to meet naturally as neighbours on the DL.\textsuperscript{182} As the troops completed their operations, patrolled the DL and played football, they exchanged imaginaries of the mission and the UN; developing their ‘peacekeeper’ identity through communication and comradeship with other national battalions. However, these battalions were subject to change as troops were swapped back and forward from their home country. This created an odd form of permanence for the mission staff, as relationships and understandings were forged, navigated, and broken on six-month cycles whilst the perpetuity of the mission remained a constant.

The magazine also emphasised the efficacy of having different national troops under one international Force Commander. Towards the end of 1957, national awards for Force Commander General Burns became a popular demonstration of the battalion’s respect for the UN mission and its leadership. Burns was ‘the first non-Swedish officer for many centuries to receive a sword from the Swedish army…’\textsuperscript{183} Bunche complimented Burns on the receipt of the

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., p. 3.
sword as a personal aside on a draft progress report, stating, ‘The presentation to you of the Swedish sword was a fine and well-merited tribute’. The Swedish sword symbolically verified the success of the UN authority over a diverse mission of national battalions and was followed by another ‘sword of honour’ from the Brazilian Minister of War. During this ceremony, other UNEF Commanders and civilian officials were also presented with ‘miniatures of the sword’ whilst ‘Lady Guests of the UNEF staff were presented with silver trays’. The Sand Dune’s promotion of these diplomatic displays between national leaders and mission commanders suggested that the cosmopolitan vision between troops on the ground could also be translated to world politics.

The magazine’s weekly editions characterised UNEF as a step towards world peace in the midst of a conflict; both functionally, by maintaining the ceasefire along the DL, but also by bringing together troops of different nations and forging transnational connections between individuals. Troops regularly reported instances of cross-cultural relationships and field-based activities across national lines in The Sand Dune and demonstrated field-based acts of cross-cultural exchange. Publishing small stories of friendships between battalions of different nations were entertaining for the reader, but also fulfilled a secondary function of exemplifying – and making real – an idealised portrayal of global diplomatic peace between all nations. The canal region itself had long held connotations of modernity in the eyes of western observers who saw the innovation as a demonstration of globalisation and the economic future of imperial Europe. The cosmopolitan collaboration within the international force echoed these globalised imaginaries as the transnational battalions worked together to ensure the operationality of the canal. Thus, through the UNEF mission, the internationalist project was not only a positive step towards world peace, but also feasible whilst remaining within the nation-state paradigm.

Conclusion

Whilst scholars have heralded UNEF as a clear break with the past, this chapter has highlighted continuities of thought regarding the deployment of a military force and the representation of foreign spaces of deployment. These continuities were particularly evident in the structures of the peacekeeping mission and its League of Nations’ blueprints. However, the mission’s authorisation, design, and deployment in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez Crisis did significantly shift member-states’ conceptions of the UN and future recourse for international disputes. The

186 Ibid.
nascent debates and plans for international policing and military interventions during the first half of the twentieth century paved the way for the authorisation of UNEF in 1956. Afro-Asian member-states’ demands for an international peacekeeping force, in response to the Suez Crisis, provided the UN leadership with the opportunity to expand their functions and position within international society. Middle powers, such as Canada and India, also expanded their diplomatic and military presence within the international community through the development of peacekeeping missions. Even British representatives attempted to co-opt the popularity of the peacekeeping project to challenge hostility within the General Assembly. The precedent set by the UN’s military involvement on the ground was a decision reflecting the wish of member-states that the UN take a more reactive, mobile, and professionalised position within international collective security.

Once on the ground, however, the insularity of the international mission encouraged the troops to develop a tourist lens and Orientalist perspective on the local populations, landscapes, and animals. The Sand Dune editions revealed that the UNEF troops established a cross-cultural community to weather the constant turn-over of battalions and staff, building transnational friendships out of their deployment. These relationships were ideal for those deployed; a positive end to the means of the operations, which they argued was dull and dangerous. The ‘exotic’ fantasies of Egyptian women and historic landscapes were exaggerated through The Sand Dune community, encouraging fellow troops to see the conflict zone through a tourist-lens for their temporary entertainment. Additionally, the magazine demonstrated the ideological benefits of the UNEF mission for the internationalist project as the troops provided an experiment in ‘consensus through diversity’.188 Mirroring the paradoxical justification of Lloyd in his speech to the General Assembly, the troops’ frequent reports of collegial effort in UNEF hospitals and on the front line seems to establish a similar sense of ‘the ends justified the means’: we may be in a conflict zone, but at least we met! Thus, the UNEF insular community, constructed by mid-level officials and peacekeeping troops, decisively ‘othered’ the host populations in order to encourage the gelling of a more ‘authentic’ international force.

By the spring of 1958, the UNEF mission had installed itself across the disputed territory with some nations bringing in their third contingents for a six-month tour of duty, suggesting a ‘certain permanency’.189 Hammarskjöld reported the successful implementation of the ceasefire along the DL to the General Assembly and Britain seconded the secretary-general during the plenary debate, commenting that ‘there has been a notable and encouraging absence of incidents

189 BNA, FO 371/134302/VR.1082/6, ‘Telegram between Canadian Ambassador in Cairo and Secretary of State in Ottawa’, 2 April 1958.
Bunche visited the UNEF troops in Gaza in mid-1959 and commented on his pride in the mission in a press release further projecting an image of the UN as a confident, reactive, and expert authority in conflict response and resolution. He stated that, ‘The United Nations Emergency Force, now in its third year in the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, is probably the most extraordinary operation ever undertaken by the United Nations, and is certainly among the most successful…’ The international perception of UNEF’s early success validated the resolution to expand the functions of the UN beyond those outlined in the UN Charter.

UNEF provided a confident beginning in, what would become, a series of post-colonial territorial conflicts inviting a ‘stabilising’ intervention from a UN peacekeeping force. Post-Suez, there was a significant uptake in nations achieving independence from European colonial powers, such as Ghana in 1957 and Guinea in 1958. These nationalist movements and geopolitical transformations within the Global South ignited Cold War anxieties for Western diplomats, especially those in Washington, who worried these newly independent nations could be vulnerable to communism. Within diplomatic circles, UNEF had demonstrated the value of an international, multilateral peacekeeping function for the de-escalation and resolution of a territorial crisis which had the potential to evolve into a proxy war between the superpowers. UNEF had earned the UN Secretariat the reputational credit that Hammarskjöld would soon seek to spend on a much larger mission to Congo.

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This chapter explores how UN staff used technical assistance to interfere in the political life of Congo during the first phase of the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) in 1960. The technical mandate of the mission allowed those in leadership to instrumentise the provision of expertise and training in support of a very specific state-building agenda, which allowed the UN peacebuilding bureaucracy to play an active role in the politics of the country while maintaining an impartial façade for international audiences. The UN Secretariat leadership staffed the Congolese civil service and technical posts with international civil servants from various UN specialised agencies, to ‘provide bone and sinew to the [Congolese] Administration’, in order to forge their own control over the post-colonial nation.² The emergency nature of the

¹ UNA, 3329.9 Rev. 1, ‘[cartographic material] deployment as of June 1961’.
² UN Doc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 25.
deployment led to improvisation and stimulated learned paternalistic instincts within UN civilian operations leadership. Examining the activities of these mid-level UN peacekeepers in Congo enables us to get a better understanding of their involvement in shaping development in post-colonial states. This chapter traces how ONUC bureaucrats and technicians entrenched a liberal internationalist order in Congo through practical operations. Although existing scholarship has revealed the growth of non-governmentality in post-colonial contexts, no work has yet been done examining the role mid-level peacekeepers played in this shift.

The UN Secretariat constructed the mission a fortnight after thirteen million Congolese gained independence from Belgium on 30th June 1960. Within days of Independence Day celebrations, the Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and President Joseph Kasavubu called upon the UN secretary-general to intervene following the escalation of tensions and eruptions of violence across the country. This instability was the result of a rebellion of sections of the Congolese army from their white Belgian officers and the subsequent illegal intervention of Belgian troops in Congolese sovereignty. Belgium’s military intervention further antagonised the citizens of the recently independent state and encouraged an exodus of Belgian settlers from the country. The evacuation created a personnel vacuum as Belgian colonial administrators had been running most governmental and infrastructural departments during the transition period, threatening core facilities such as food distribution, radio stations, power stations, water and sanitation services, and air traffic control. Thus, there was no stable handover to Congolese control, but an immediate loss of skilled personnel and institutional memory, creating a crisis in governance. The conflict expanded to global proportions as imperial economic interests in the mining regions undermined Congo’s existence as a unified state. This became popularly known as the ‘Congo Crisis’ in international media and UN debates. In the summer of 1960, a Security Council meeting authorised the peacekeeping mission with only Britain, France, and the

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4 Greg Mann’s work on nongovernmentality examines these dynamics and the assumption of sovereignty by non-state actors in the context of various NGOs in the Western Sahel. G. Mann, From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality (Cambridge: CUP, 2014).


Republic of China abstaining from the vote. The absence of permanent members in the resolution text and the invitation from the Congolese leadership ensured the success of this vote in the Security Council when it had proved impossible for the UNEF resolution. ONUC was deployed within a fortnight. The special representative to the secretary-general Ralph Bunche articulated the innovative dual mandate of military and civilian administration to his staff in July 1960: ‘You are here to pacify and then to administer the Congo’.10

This chapter begins by examining the international and regional pressures on the UN Secretariat leadership and provides context for the rapid deployment of ONUC. The competing Belgian factions and fragile Congolese leadership at the forefront of the politics of decolonisation in Congo were centre stage in the independence negotiations in Brussels and in the capital Leopoldville. ONUC’s deployment of thousands of international staff to Congo was based on the UN leadership’s conception of the nation as a ‘blank slate’ in need (in the view of the international staff) of a guiding hand as it approached modernity.11 Once in the field, the ONUC administration wielded power over the Congolese population and politicians through controlling access to key facilities, such as air traffic control. This chapter will demonstrate that the technocratic approach of ONUC personnel towards the newly independent Congolese population was grounded in racist assumptions and excluded or ignored Congolese knowledge, experience, and demands.

Investigating the field operations of the ONUC mission complements headquarter-centric narratives of anti-colonial diplomatic relations with the UN during the Cold War. Not only did several Afro-Asian bloc representatives recognise the state-building aspirations of the mission staff, but they also publicly criticised the UN directly for behaving as a state-like entity pursuing imperialist control.12 Additionally, the UN intervention provoked long-lasting Afro-Asian suspicion of UN peacekeeping missions for the rest of the Cold War.13 Pierre-Michel Durand has argued that, due to the imperialist activities of the ONUC mission, the Afro-Asian bloc perceived ONUC as a failure of the UN’s anti-colonial and self-determination credentials and left a suspicion of UN peacekeeping missions in African populations until the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia, where the organisation supported

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9 These three nations remained suspicious of the peacekeeping project. UN Doc, S/4387, ‘(1960) Resolution of 14 July 1960: The Congo Question’.
11 UN Doc, S/4557, ‘Second progress report to the Secretary-General’, p. 36/37.
the territory’s transition process from South African occupation in 1989. He argues that perceptions of ONUC’s operational failings were intensified by the expectations placed on the UN by the Afro-Asian bloc to support the liberation of colonised populations, as self-determination was one of the principles encoded in the UN Charter. Building on Durand’s work, this chapter examines the practices of UN peacekeeping to reveal the intricacies of ONUC’s power over post-colonial Congolese governance and the staff’s efforts to interfere in the nation’s political future.

Drawing on a wide range of archives, this chapter unearths colonial continuities in the administrative and technical practices of the UN operations civilian personnel. Colonial continuities, particularly, paternalistic rhetoric, racial exceptionalism, and ideological supremacy are revealed through practice-oriented analysis. Drawing on oral histories, images, and newspaper articles, in addition to documentary sources from a variety of state, non-state and personal archives, this chapter illuminates the control ONUC staff had over the Congolese population’s future. The oral histories aid in accessing a variety of perspectives within the UN bureaucracy that may have been lost or anonymised in the institutional archive. While these oral testimonies are influenced by later representation of the mission, they nevertheless enable us to access internal dilemmas absent in institutional sources. They represent a breadth of civilian operations leadership but remain focused on the mid-level staff and leadership, rather than the low-level technical staff deployed to Congolese civil service and technical posts.

This was the largest peacekeeping mission during the Cold War period with, at its height, over twenty thousand military personnel and civilian technicians on the ground. It also came with significant reputational risk. There was a perception of disorganisation in the early months of the mission, as The New York Times reported: ‘the civilian staff… mushroomed so fast that nobody either inside or outside the organisation is able to tell exactly how many there are, who is here and what he is doing’. In December 1960, James Pitman MP stated in the House of Commons that:

In this Congo case, however, there is a new situation which we seem to fail to realise is a usurpation by the United Nations of the authority of the local national government. This is a tremendous danger because this

18 Tanner, ‘U.N. IN CONGO’
new development could involve the very survival of the United Nations'.

The international interests in the crisis heightened expectations of the UN mission; all eyes were on Leopoldville in July 1960.

**Historiographies of the Congo Crisis, UN officials, and international development**

Over the last two decades, significant historiographical emphasis has been given to the Congo Crisis as a ‘turning point’ in broader narratives of Congolese politics, decolonisation, and the Cold War. Congolese political groups’ solidarity in their demands for independence from the Belgian colonial administration in 1959 represent one of the earliest organised nationalist movements in Africa, following Ghana in 1957. Anti-colonialist activists developed local, national, and transnational networks that connected, communicated, and were inspired by Congo’s journey towards independence, from apartheid South Africa to French-controlled Algeria.

European colonial governments, particularly the British government, feared the ‘domino effect’ of decolonisation as a threat both to international security and political stability across the continent. Robert Vitalis has revealed contemporary racial fears of a ‘race war’ during this period within elite Western circles and highlighted widespread concerns that aid or military support to decolonising states could weaponise Black aggression against whites. He argues that these race fears combined with fears of Soviet expansion, stating that ‘Issues of Foreign Affairs in the 1950s and 1960s include matter-of-fact descriptions of the hatred for whites that drives decolonization and the psychological impairments that communists so masterfully exploit’.

Thus, the Congo Crisis ignited Western diplomats’ fears of Soviet interference and provoked anxieties of a burgeoning race war. Congo’s decolonisation also presented an opportunity for

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superpower interference and activist violence in Congo’s neighbours.\textsuperscript{25} Scholarship on international responses to the Congo Crisis, such as Alan James’s work on the British government’s reaction, has argued that British foreign policy decisions were driven by concerns about how Congolese independence would bolster anti-colonial activism within neighbouring populations.\textsuperscript{26} As explored in this chapter, these colonial powers’ anxieties about the potential violence and loss of income brought on by decolonisation plans caused further instability within the central region of Africa once European mining companies began to react defensively to protect their access to African natural resources and labour.\textsuperscript{27}

Historians such as Alanna O’Malley, John Kent and Lise Namikas have used Cold War politics as a lens through which to view discussions of the ‘Congo Crisis’, its global implications, and its effect on geopolitical conceptions of decolonisation.\textsuperscript{28} As the crisis erupted, the implications of an unstable Congo, and spread of nationalist movements across the continent encouraged the trans-Atlantic alliance and Western leadership to shift their gaze to post-colonial interference in Leopoldville. These histories help to illuminate the motivations of newly independent states’ involvement with Cold War superpowers as middle powers engineered ideological and regional alliances to expand their diplomatic credentials. Understanding the Congo Crisis as part of Cold War politics allows us to open discussions of the roles, fears, and perspectives of colonial and ex-Colonial states on the developing internationalist order, and to explore how the UN staff navigated the influx of new states into their deliberative forums. However, these works focus on a high-diplomatic powers and personalities, limiting their analysis. This thesis avoids this limitation by examining the operations and personalities in the field as integral to larger geopolitical and high-diplomacy shifts during decolonisation.

Another strand of literature has focused on Congolese politics and perspectives. Due to the web of nations, organisations, and companies involved in the crisis, scholarship has often focused on key figures or politicians, such as Patrice Lumumba, as a means of revealing sources of power in Congo. Lumumba’s murder in January 1961 has long been a source of controversy, encouraging scholars to examine his political life and rhetoric, his allies, and enemies for evidence of a conspiracy.\textsuperscript{29} Lumumba’s anti-colonial activism and criticism of US support of

\textsuperscript{26} James, \textit{Britain and the Congo Crisis}, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{28} O’Malley, \textit{The Diplomacy of Decolonisation}, p. 27. Kent, \textit{The Neo-colonialism of Decolonisation}; Namikas, \textit{Battleground Africa}.
British imperialism made him vulnerable to accusations of Soviet collusion, despite his non-aligned position, consulting and requesting aid from both superpowers. Thus, investigations of his death have also shed light on his life, providing insight into why he specifically was seen as a threat to Western democracy by Western diplomats, as will be explored in this chapter.

However, due to the high-politics focus of much of the literature on the crisis, the role of mid-level UN peacekeeping officials played in state-building activities in Congo is rarely examined. The reputation of Hammarskjöld has undergone a significant revision in the last decade. Understanding Hammarskjöld’s personal and political ideologies contextualises his recruitment choices and political influence on the ONUC bureaucracy, which shaped the staffing of the mission and character of the mid-level bureaucracy on the ground. Following his death in 1961, Hammarskjöld’s image was sanctified by the UN staff who worked with him. However, recent scholarship has treated him as a more controversial figure, particularly his anti-Communist politics and how this shaped his approach to UN conflict resolution. Scholars, such as Edward Johnson, have challenged the institutional view that Hammarskjöld was a martyr for UN principles. Instead, Hammarskjöld sought to ‘[play] with the ambiguities of the Charter’ in order to extend the power of his office and expand the involvement of the organisation in international negotiations and conflict resolution. To further his interests within the Secretariat, Hammarskjöld cultivated a circle of American advisors, including Ralph Bunche and Andrew Cordier, to implement a liberal international policy that would protect ‘First World’, Western interests and pursue a ‘McCarthyite’ (meaning extensive, ill-evidenced, and anti-Left) purge of the UN Secretariat during the 1950s. Stabilisation of post-colonial states, through diplomatic or operational means became the institution’s policy for preventing escalation into Cold War instrumentalisation and, as they saw it, the beginning of a third world war. This chapter examines how Hammarskjöld’s access to Congolese political life through ONUC staffing allowed him to

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entrench an anti-Communist culture within the UN civil service and the operational opportunity to implement anti-Soviet policies in Congo as part of a peacebuilding approach.

Scholarship on Ralph Bunche has, largely, maintained a positive view of his diplomatic activity.\(^{37}\) James Cockayne and David M. Malone have lauded him as the ‘father of peacekeeping’, arguing that it was in the field of UN peace operations that Bunche left his ‘most enduring legacy’.\(^{38}\) However, like Hammarskjöld, Bunche is beginning to be re-examined, especially his more controversial efforts and beliefs during decolonisation. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja has explored Bunche’s anti-Lumumba position, during his time as representative in Congo, and argued that Bunche’s ‘contempt’ for the Congolese Prime Minister was a ‘contributing factor to Lumumba’s demise’.\(^{39}\) Nzongola-Ntalaja’s analysis of cables between Hammarskjöld and Bunche during Congo’s early months illuminates the internal racist logic of UN peacekeeping staff and how it affected Congolese politics.\(^{40}\) Carole Collins has made the same claim about the influence of Andrew Cordier, another UN inner circle official deployed to Congo. She argued that Cordier’s anti-Lumumba politics directly contributed to the violent instability of September 1960 and the subsequent establishment of authoritarian rule in Congo.\(^{41}\) This chapter builds upon these works and highlights manifestations of this racist logic. It focuses on the instances of this prejudice throughout ONUC civilian departments and contributes to studies on UN interference in Lumumba’s political position.

This chapter’s analysis of ONUC staff’s use of technical assistance draws upon the vast scholarship criticising international development in Africa. International development projects relied upon the same justifications and aims as ONUC’s technical assistance operations: the ‘modernisation’ or ‘advance’ of a nation and guidance on the necessary steps to meet an arbitrary standard of sufficient ‘advancement’.\(^{42}\) James Ferguson’s work in *The Anti-politics Machine* has illustrated a pattern of technocracy towards local politics and history in international


development practices. His case study of 1970s and ‘80s Lesotho emphasises how international staff justified the re-allocation of resources as ‘technical solutions to technical problems’, thus rendering explicitly political decisions apolitical.43 This apolitical rhetoric also entrenched a characterisation of the international development staff as unassailable experts, rooted in knowledge superior to that of local populations. Providing an earlier example of adherence to this development discourse, ONUC leadership, similarly, obscured their political decision-making and operations through mandated access to social and education development projects and technical personnel in Congo. The ‘anti-politics’ of ONUC technical assistance rhetoric disguised the explicitly political aims of the peacekeeping leadership.

ONUC leadership’s technical assistance and infrastructural aid were part of a longer legacy of colonial power dynamics and conceptions of technocratic superiority, grounded in racialised post-enlightenment conceptions of ‘modernity’ and ‘progress’.44 Racial theorists Louise Seamster and Victor Ray have highlighted the pervasive racist foundational assumptions built into 1960s ‘progress’ narratives, such as the development discourse employed by the ONUC civilian administrators. They have argued that, ‘Formalizing the association of civilization and savagery with race, Enlightenment philosophers explicitly tied human difference to varying possibilities of progress’.45 Similarly, the racial hierarchies of colonists’ mission civilisatrice and late colonial development projects were built into the logic of postwar development practices. British politicians used humanitarian rhetoric to justify their development operations and maintaining colonial rule whilst making the same judgements about human capacity for progress as their Enlightenment ancestors.46 Postwar, the humanitarian field professionalised, and newly independent states, such as Ghana and India, increasingly used development projects as diplomatic tools in the Cold War;47 a resource to be exchanged for financial support and diplomatic solidarity. Alan Lester has argued that the racialised rationale and hierarchies interwoven with postwar aid remained the same as during nineteenth-century colonial administrations; the dominant party determined who would receive the aid and the type of

43 Ferguson, The Anti-Politics Machine, p. 87.
support to be supplied. Mark Duffield and Vernon Hewitt have also examined the ‘external tutelage’ relationship between technocrat and civilian. They argue that these development projects imposed political futures onto the receiving populations. This legacy manifested in UN staff encouraging the ‘improvement’ or ‘modernisation’ of Congo, the organisation’s political vision, and assuming that is was entitled to dictate Congo’s political evolution.

Scholarship on the Belgian Congo provides region-specific insight into the power dynamics and political inequalities inherited and perpetuated by the ONUC civilian operations staff. In a similar manner to Belgian colonial agronomists, the ONUC leadership used technical assistance and international staffing of Congolese communication, healthcare, and administrative facilities to ‘modernise’ and shape the development of Congo. There are comparatively fewer studies detailing the Belgian government’s approach to scientific exploration in its colonies, despite a wealth of historiographic work on the technocratic efforts of the British and French governments. Unlike French and British administrations, which encouraged differing forms of indirect rule leading to the creation of stratified societies topped by an elite class, the Belgian’s slogan was ‘no elites, no problems’, preferring to populate the country’s essential jobs with predominantly European settlers and a small group of Congolese évoluté, or local elites who had ‘evolved’ via Europeanisation and assimilation into the settler communities. The UN leadership disregarded the colonial educational restrictions placed upon the population and sought instead to find ‘technical solutions to technical problems’ by flying in thousands of international ‘expert’ staff. Taken together, these studies suggest that Congo’s colonial experience, economically and socially, laid the foundations for the post-colonial instability and regional restiveness following independence. Yet, they overlook an important dynamic in the evolution and propagation of

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54 Ferguson, The Anti-politics Machine, p. 87.
domestic volatility in Congo: the relationship between local elites, mid-level ONUC actors, and the UN headquarters.

**The escalation of tensions in Congo**

The involvement of UN personnel in Congolese politics began before the crisis, as the independence process and consultation with the Belgian government unfolded. Later UN Security Council debates on the Congo Crisis and the subsequent construction of the ONUC mandate intersected with interests and motivations of multiple nations, including Cold War superpowers. As Winifred Tickner (wife of UN representative Fred Tickner) wrote in her diary, ‘At United Nations HQ in New York, a breeze of expectancy swept through the Secretariat Building’, indicating the prevailing feelings of delegates and UN staff at the prospect of launching another armed peacekeeping mission.55 The ONUC mission benefited from the reputation of the UNEF mission, which, by 1958, was perceived by the international community to have successfully deescalated the violence in Suez and re-stabilised the Sinai and Gaza regions.56 The UNEF mission was dwarfed by the operations mandated for the ONUC mission, however, and the Congo Crisis presented an administrative and military challenge that would test the operational and diplomatic dexterity of UN peacekeeping.

The speed of Belgo-Congolese negotiations for Congolese independence left little time for meaningful preparations to ensure a smooth post-colonial transition to Congolese autonomy. Crawford Young argues that during the spring of 1960, the political future of the nation, ‘surged… on a tide over which neither the coloniser nor the colonised had much control’.57 Following failed Belgian-controlled elections and a series of riots in November 1959,58 a Congolese alliance of political groups and tribal representatives, including Kasavubu and Lumumba, arrived in Brussels for the Belgo-Congolese Round Table Conferences in January 1960 to negotiate Congolese self-governance. Within five days of the conference beginning, the representatives had agreed a date for Congolese independence: 30th June 1960.59 The Belgian government used the talks to shore up their economic interests in the territory with an intention

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56 BNA, FO 371/134302/VR.1082/6, ‘Telegram between Canadian Ambassador in Cairo and Secretary of State in Ottawa’, 2 April 1958.
57 Young, *Politics in Congo*, p. 4.
59 P. Lumumba, ‘Statement at the Closing Session of the Belgo-Congolese Round Table Conference’, 20th February 1960 [available at: https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/lumumba/1960/02/statement.htm accessed on 17/03/2020]
(although little idea of how) to extend de facto rule over the nation post-independence. Whilst Belgians in Congo were anxious to maintain legal and political authority over the Congolese natural resources, the Belgian representatives in Brussels were privately confident that independence would be in name only; the performance of supporting Congolese self-governance would be a gamble or le pari Congolais (The Congolese bet). David Gibbs has shown that the Belgian government had strong economic and military incentives to retain its influence over the country post-independence. Indeed, they continued to renovate their military bases in May 1960 and dedicate funds to improving these facilities. The efforts of the Belgian government to performatively support independence reassured the new Congolese leaders enough to permit continued Belgian social, financial, and military ‘assistance and cooperation’, outlined in the Treaty of Friendship between Belgium and the Congo. Thus, the diplomatic understanding between the parties and the terms of the Treaty allayed Congolese suspicions and bolstered Belgian hopes for continued extraction and military involvement post-independence.

In the months following the Round Table agreement, Ralph Bunche witnessed the Belgian politicians in Brussels behaving contemptuously towards visiting Congolese politicians and community leaders. Although the Round Table talks had been ‘peaceful and friendly’, as Lumumba noted in his official speech, in informal settings the mask slipped and revealed the racist attitudes of those who had just helped to facilitate the nation’s independence. Bunche attended meetings in Brussels on 25th June before flying to Leopoldville for the independence celebrations and during his visit he wrote a personal letter to Hammarskjöld, complaining that, ‘the banter back and forth across the table between the Belgian officials in the presence of several Congolese, in the most outmoded paternalistic and condescending tone, was downright embarrassing’. These glimpses of Belgian politicians’ behaviour towards Congolese politicians, witnessed by a UN representative, confirmed the colonial attitudes of the Belgians. The withdrawing power seemed convinced of its ability to covertly retain its influence, despite the loss of its official authority marked for 30th June 1960.

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61 Young, Politics in Congo, p. 4.
63 Ibid.
65 Lumumba, ‘Statement at the Closing Session of the Belgo-Congolese Round Table Conference’, 20 February 1960.
Bunche was also made aware of a ‘seriously threatening situation’ in Katanga in his pre-Independence Day visit. Disagreements between the Belgian diplomats in Brussels and mining businessmen based in Katanga, the mineral-rich southern province, over Congo governance sparked hostility. Katanga-based Belgians’ concerns over the speed of independence were compounded further by the realisation that there was no established plan for the future of the mining company Union Minière du Haut Katanga (henceforth, Union Minière) post-independence. Belgians working for Union Minière took umbrage at the fact that Belgian political representatives at the Round Table conferences were solely government ministers and advisors who had spent little, if any, time in the Congo and were, therefore, perceived as detached from the reality on the ground. Katanga-based Belgians mockingly described the Brussels politicians as ‘Dry-season pilgrims’. Endeavouring to protect the company’s interests and profits, the funds that Union Minière had marked for tax were instead transferred to Katangan leader Moïse Tshombe in the hopes of secession following independence. As Wolf Radmann has uncovered in his research on Union Minière, ‘the new, independent Congo would become automatically the most important single shareholder of [Union Minière] without any decree of nationalisation and without paying any indemnity.’ In the eyes of those running Union Minière, this would be an unjust economic benefit for the Congolese government. Thus, Union Minière’s Belgian leaders financially supported the nascent Katangan secessionist movement in the months before independence to maintain their resource extraction and profit, despite decolonisation. Bunche’s awareness of Belgium’s complex involvement in Katanga, and plans to secede from post-independence Congo, in June 1960 was limited but extant. Therefore, Hammarskjöld’s future decision to define the Katangan crisis as an internal political issue, and thus outside the mission’s mandate, intentionally omitted Bunche’s discoveries from his June visit in order to defend ONUC’s lack of response to Belgium’s participation in and financing of the Katangan secessionist movement.

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67 Ibid.
71 Awareness was also building within the international media, see: H. Gilroy, ‘The Congo: Problems of Independence: Struggle for Control of Belgian Colony grows amid Regional and Tribal Controversy’, The New York Times, 19th June 1960.

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Businessmen within Union Minière and a number of evacuating colonial administrators were united in the goal of disturbing the process of independence directly, from within Congo. Many remaining Belgian colonists sought to destabilise the impending independence process by intervening in Congolese attempts to prepare for the transition to independence. The colonial Belgians’ ‘out of spite’ destroyed all technical blueprints and instruction manuals for many of the government buildings and facilities in Leopoldville in the weeks before independence. ONUC Chief of Civilian Operations Šture Linnér argued this was ‘crucial’ to the subsequent collapse of law and order following independence as the country was left without documentation of its own equipment. The panicked flight of many Belgian doctors, technicians, scientists and teachers, or ‘isolated whites’, from the ‘feverish’ violence throughout July combined to create a professional

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76 Ibid, p. 9.
vacuum in the Congolese civil service and technical services. Obstruction by Belgians based in Congo, aiming to encourage instability and thus substantiate racist Western predictions of Africans’ inability to self-govern, only further added to this vacuum.

The political volatility in Congo intensified as Independence Day approached and Lumumba and Kasavubu’s alliance became tenuous. The two men worked in coalition for the independence of the nation and the establishment of loï fondamental, the draft constitution, during the negotiations with the Belgian government. Alongside fellow Congolese politicians, including future Katangan secessionist leader Tshombe, Kasavubu, and Lumumba attended the Belgo-Congolese Round Table conferences as leaders of their respective parties, Alliance des Bakongo (ABAKO) and Mouvement National Congolais-Lumumba (MNC-L). However, the partnership between the two men appeared to those around them to weaken as their political visions for post-colonial Congo diverged. Hammarskjöld sent Bunche to stay in Congo for a few weeks to represent him at the independence ceremonies, to advise the new government, and to inquire into future needs for UN technical assistance.

In a hastily-scribbled personal letter to Hammarskjöld, Bunche emphasised his concern about the ‘temporary relief’ of the coalition between the incoming President and Prime-Minister. He perceived their relations as ‘strained, even hostile…[they] studiously ignore each other, exchange no words beyond those absolutely necessary and, through their cohorts, at times openly squabble about protocol precedence. The compromise that makes a government here possible is almost certainly a temporary one’. The biggest point of division appeared to be ‘Lumumba’s desire to change the Constitution so as to assume full power [over the Congolese parliament] and Kasavubu’s resistance to this’, which he believed would provoke a ‘showdown’.

It appeared that the united front presented by the two men during the Round Table conferences had dissolved in the face of the practicalities of post-colonial governance.

Bunche’s letters provide an insight into the UN official’s thoughts about the Congolese politicians in the weeks before the Congo Crisis erupted. His opinions would, following the deployment of the mission, become integral to the construction of the future ONUC mandate.

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and bureaucracy. Bunche noted that Kasavubu ‘is friendly and by reputation a man of integrity…’ although ‘not an impressive personality’.\textsuperscript{84} Bunche was also pleased to hear the incoming President give a ‘strong endorsement of the UN’ at his oath ceremony in the joint session of Congolese parliament on 27\textsuperscript{th} June and suggested that Kasavubu’s intention for Congo to seek membership of the UN indicated that ‘Kasa-Vubu [sic] has matured into true nationalist thinking’.\textsuperscript{85} Bunche was present to advise the new government but he was also in the country to see that the future Congo would be led by a politician who would neatly fit into the liberal internationalist vision and nation-state paradigm outlined in the UN Charter.

Bunche’s conceptions of the incoming Prime Minister were largely determined by the rumours and impressions of those around him, such as Belgian ministers Ganshof van der Meersch and August Edmond de Schryver. This was because he spent significantly less time in the company of Lumumba during his first weeks in Congo in June than he did with Kasavubu and his allies. Bunche reported to Hammarskjöld that, ‘Everyone agrees that Lumumba is quick and politically agile, but he is obviously young and untried and many consider him lacking in integrity, this being based mainly on his conviction for embezzlement when he was in the post office’.\textsuperscript{86} Although he heard from van der Meersch that Lumumba had ‘met his first test’ of an incident in Katanga ‘with strength, wisdom and decisiveness’, Bunche remained suspicious of Lumumba’s capabilities and trustworthiness in office.\textsuperscript{87} Lumumba appeared to him as a ‘man of plural faces’, ‘the most recent version of God’s angry young man’, and was already indicating concerns about the ‘suspect sources’ of Lumumba’s campaign funds and rumours of connection to Moscow.\textsuperscript{88} Although he had no proof for these accusations, these internal communications between Bunche and Hammarskjöld, pre-ONUC, reveal the ease with which Bunche accepted and escalated negative rumours about the democratically elected Prime Minister.

Lumumba’s Independence Day speech at celebrations in late June further intensified Bunche’s concerns about the Prime Minister. During the celebrations at the Palais de la Nation in Leopoldville, the Belgian King Baudouin III opened the independence ceremony with a boastful speech chronicling the ‘genius’ of the Belgian colonial system. \textit{The Guardian} reported that the speech ‘contained no apologies for the colonial system, but was instead intended as a vindication of it’.\textsuperscript{89} In a letter to Hammarskjöld, Bunche reported it as ‘maladroit and ill-advised to say the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{84} UNA, S-1069-0012-11, ‘Letter-report from Bunche to Hammarskjöld’, 4\textsuperscript{th} July 1960.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} UNA, S-1069-0012-11, ‘Letter from Bunche to Hammarskjöld’, 27\textsuperscript{th} June 1960.
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{88} UNA, S-1069-0012-11, ‘Letter-report from Bunche to Hammarskjöld’, 4\textsuperscript{th} July 1960.
  \item \textsuperscript{89} ‘Marred: M. Lumumba’s offensive speech in King’s presence’, \textit{The Guardian}, 1 June 1960.
\end{itemize}
least’. Of Lumumba, special assistant to Bunche, F T Liu recalled how, in response to Baudouin:

Lumumba rose and he made a hard speech, fierce. He started with the history of the Congo; he recalled the very cruel way Leopold II […] had treated the Congolese. They were cutting their arms sometimes when they didn’t pay the tax, and so on. A very harsh speech.  

Lumumba’s speech was particularly ill-received by Bunche, who described it as ‘acid, hard-hitting anti-colonial speech’ and wrote that, ‘[Lumumba] overdid it, especially with regard to his emphasis on the great struggle waged by the Congolese for their independence.’ To the contrary, of course, it came to them easily and swiftly on the wings of Belgian panic…”  

Bunche felt that the Congolese population had achieved independence relatively easily and that it was ‘ungracious’ of the Prime Minister to ‘make big political capital by lambasting the departing masters’. Similarly, a number of leading Western newspapers, shocked by its ungrateful tone, led with the ‘pugnacious’ speech in their reporting. Indeed, the economic impact of Lumumba’s speech was visible through a decline in Union Minère’s share prices. Bunche sent these impressions to the Secretariat in New York. His early impression further prejudiced the UN leadership against Lumumba and reinforced racist conceptions of the African nationalist as an ‘angry young man’ rather than a credible political leader.

Four days after the Independence Ceremony, a mutiny in the Congolese army (previous known as the Force Publique and recently renamed Armée Nationale Congolaise or ANC), erupted in Thysville (in the western region of Congo) and rapidly spread across the rest of the country. Belgium responded militarily to the crisis on 10th July, to quash the rioting and ‘anarchy’ of the mutiny by deploying paratroopers to the south-eastern regions. On 14th July, in the Security Council, the Belgian representative justified the invasion as a ‘humanitarian’ intervention, ‘with the sole purpose of ensuring the safety of European and other members of the population and of protecting human lives in general’. In the same week, Moïse Tshombe attempted to take advantage of the preoccupied Central Congolese Government and declared the Katangan region was seceding. The military invasion, involvement in the Katangan secession, and use of a

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93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
98 For more on the Katanga secession, see R. M. Irwin, Sovereignty in the Congo Crisis, in L. James and E. Leake (eds.), Decolonization and the Cold War: Negotiating Independence (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 203–218; R. Declercq,
humanitarian justification all illustrate the Belgian government’s intention of maintaining economic interests and military control on the ground in Congo, in violation of the Treaty of Friendship.99

Using a crude version of the ‘unwilling or unable’ international law doctrine,100 the Belgium government argued that their ‘humanitarian’ intervention was necessary because they had deemed the Congolese government ‘unable’ to control the violence of the ANC against European settlers. If accepted by the international community, this would recast the Belgian intervention as self-defence. European colonial powers with vested interests in Congolese mining companies dominated the debate and shifted the narrative from a breach of sovereignty to the incompetence of an independent African government, unable to stabilise their nation.

Stuart Cloete, a reporter for LIFE Magazine, reinforced this racist argument, writing:

The Congo was a black giant whose bones, sinews and nerves were white. Now, unsupported by the bone, the nerves destroyed, the sinews cut, the giant has collapsed and lies writhing in the jungle from which he had almost risen. The effort was too much for him.101

This narrative burdened the Congolese government with the responsibility of satisfying the Belgian government (and their allies within the international community and media) of the safety of the territory before Brussels would withdraw its invading troops. Echoing the manipulative techniques of the British government during the Suez crisis, both colonial powers used their occupying presence on the ground as a position of authority over the incoming UN forces. The Belgians were free to move the goalposts in terms of defining ‘security’ in Congo as they wished.

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100 This refers to the self-defence doctrine in international law (referring to Article 51 of the UN Charter) whereby a state is permitted to intervene in the territory of another sovereign state that is ‘unwilling or unable’ to police non-state actor violence or aggression that is based within its borders.
The Cold War context intensified Belgium’s interests in retaining control over natural resources in Central Africa, building upon prior efforts to thwart Hitler’s acquisition of Congolese uranium ore. With rumours circulating about Lumumba’s links to the Soviet government, many Western nations were economically and ideologically invested in ‘protecting’ Congolese natural resources from Communists. Bunche repeatedly complained in his personal reports to Hammarskjöld that Congolese actors, especially Tshombe, did not recognise the international implications of this conflict. Bunche, anxious about Lumumba’s Soviet connections, stressed the need to prevent the crisis from becoming ‘another Korea’. Liu, shared these fears, noting that ‘The country had collapsed and if nothing was done, there would be a power vacuum which could very well lead to a major world crisis involving the direct involvement of the two major superpowers.’

With violence escalating across the country in response to the Belgian intervention, and UN officials, like Bunche, present in Leopoldville, the international media expected the UN to mount an operation. Lumumba and Kasavubu jointly requested a UN response in a letter to Hammarskjöld on 12th July, demanding the withdrawal of Belgian soldiers in order to re-stabilise

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103 UN Doc, S/4557, ‘Second progress report to the Secretary-General’, p. 50.
the affected areas. The leaders were clear that the mission should challenge Belgian ‘colonial machinations’ in Katanga rather than negotiate the continued presence of Union Minière capitalists in the southern region. The Belgian government’s refusal to withdraw its troops during the Security Council debate on 13th July led to the rapid authorisation, construction, and deployment of the ONUC mission by Security Council vote on 14th July 1960. Unlike the UNEF mission, the dynamic of the Congo Crisis did not directly involve any permanent members of the Security Council and so passed without the need for Uniting for Peace legislation. The vote mandated the mission to dissolve the Belgian’s ‘humanitarian intervention’ and to re-establish law and order.

Tshombe insulated the Katangan region within a cordon sanitaire from much of the violence in the north and eastern regions and provided Belgians with a safe space in which to recalibrate before the deployment of ONUC. Although other Katangan politicians, such as Jason Sendwe, contested Katanga’s secession, Tshombe retained control of most of the southernmost province with the aid of Belgian troops and financial support. Tshombe’s harbouring of many Belgian and European settlers and troops who fled Congo made waves internationally. The occupation was widely reported by global anti-colonialist newspapers, as well as the Soviet publication, Pravda: ‘The whole world knows that Katanga is occupied by Belgian troops. And that [it] is far from being [a] domestic Congolese issue. It is an act of aggression threatening general peace.’ Tshombe complicated the UN’s mission to Congo as his links with Belgium (and thus the credibility of the secessionist movement) remained in question. He demonstrated his personal devotion to Katangan independence and aspirations for the secession to be formalised within the international community when he wrote to the ICRC. He reported steps taken to align the country’s gendarmerie to the principles of the Geneva Conventions, using this compliance to exemplify Katanga’s credible claim to statehood. Tshombe’s relationship with the Belgians was dynamic and changeable. Bunche reported:

When asked about conditions in Katanga when the Belgian troops leave, [Tshombe] replied that “the Belgian troops can go”, “we do not need them”, “they should leave quickly”, and “we are strong”. The Belgian

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107 UN Doc, S/4382, ‘Cable dated 12 July 1960 from the President of the Republic of the Congo and Supreme Commander of the National Army and the Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence Addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations’.  
officials said that this was the first time that M. Tshombe had spoken in this way about the Belgian troops.\footnote{UNA, S-0845-0001-03-00001, ‘Cable from Bunche to Hammarskjöld, Report from Elizabethville, Katanga’, 4 August 1960, p. 14.}

Making a similar argument, American Ambassador George McGhee, who was present during the early stages of ONUC, suggested that Tshombe, ‘was independent [of Union Minière]. I think he was basically a Katanga nationalist…Obviously, he was playing a game here, but I don’t think he was under the control of Union Minière’.\footnote{G. McGhee, ‘Interview transcript’, Yale-UN Oral History Project, 9 May 1990, p. 20.} Guy Vanthemsche has also characterised Tshombe as a powerful nationalist actor with the ‘ear and trust of many whites in central Africa’.\footnote{G. Vanthemsche, 

\textit{Belgium and the Congo, 1885–1980} (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), p. 210.} Thus, Tshombe’s demands for Katangan secession was a delicate area of the ONUC mission and required a diplomatic approach in order to balance the context in Elizabethville (the capital of Katanga) with the politics of Leopoldville.

Belgium’s materiel and financial support of Katanga undermined protests of autonomy. Consolidating the Katangese opposition to the central government in August 1960, the Belgian government ordered the mobilisation of Belgian troops from neighbouring divisions in Ruanda-Urundi.\footnote{BNA, FO 371/146779 JB2251/238, ‘Text of an appeal by Mwami of Ruanda to UN’, 12th September 1960.} UN official Ian Berendsen recalled witnessing multiple Belgian troops marching with the Katangese gendarmerie.\footnote{I. Berendsen, ‘Interview transcript’, Yale-UN Oral History Project, 4 May 1990, p. 18.} Belgian influence in Katanga also included professors from Liège and Ghent ‘[writing] the Katangan constitution’, instructing the national intelligence service, and controlling the central bank.\footnote{van Reybrouck, 

\textit{Congo}, p. 311/312.} This connection became so visible that the Tunisian representative in the Security Council argued, ‘One cannot help thinking that there is a disturbing connexion between the intervention of Belgian paratroopers and the tendency, in Katanga, towards disunion [from the Republic of Congo central government].’\footnote{UN Doc, S/PV.878, ‘United Nations Security Council Official Record, 878th Meeting’, 21st July 1960, p.7.} Tshombe maintained that without continued infrastructural assistance Katanga would have collapsed during the July mutiny: ‘[the Belgian] presence has therefore been a factor making for peace and not for disorder.’\footnote{UN Doc, S/4451, ‘Observations by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Republic of the Congo on the Memorandum by Major General H. T. Alexander’, p. 51.} Thus, Tshombe’s allegiances legitimised the continued presence of Belgians in Congo, challenging ONUC’s mandate to force them to withdraw.

Belgium’s allies were surprised by the Belgian military presence and their refusal to withdraw their troops and colonial staff. Officials within the British Foreign Office reported that comments had been made about the Belgian government losing diplomatic credibility due to its assumed complicity with the capitalists in Katanga and their refusal to comply with the UN
Security Council request to withdraw their troops. The Foreign Office reported ‘a feeling that the Belgian Government could be playing a more active role in ensuring its compliance with the Security Council’s resolutions.’

The French publicly offered their support to the Belgians in Katanga: ‘[the] French government feel[ing] strongly that Western Powers should do nothing which might impede [the] restoration of Belgian influence in the Congo if and when circumstances allow’. However, the Belgian military leader General Roger A. Gheysen argued that Brussels’s position was far more aligned with ONUC’s mandate of unifying Congo than supporting Katangan secession. He stated that ‘Belgium did not want Katanga to secede from the rest of the Congo, and Belgium does not recognise Tshombe’. This complex web of allegiances – international, domestic, and individual – of the Belgian government and Belgians in Katanga provides context for the Belgian government’s’ refusal to recognise Katanga as an independent state, despite a number of Belgians supporting the secession.

Meanwhile, on the ground, the continued presence of the Belgian colonial staff became a significant source of international staffing for the ONUC mission. Paradoxically, in their attempt to forge stability within Congo, the ONUC leadership requested the continued employment of eight hundred Belgian technicians to repair the Congolese civil service.

Following the creation of ONUC, there was a ‘concerted influx of Belgians’ to Congo as Hammarskjöld encouraged the Belgian government to make technicians trained in maintaining the military and administrative functions of the Kamina and Kitona army bases available to ONUC. Echoing Hammarskjöld’s decision to preserve British technical and military staff during the UNEF mission, the ONUC mission also provided a conduit for colonial officials’ presence and legitimised their authority as part of the stabilising, peacebuilding process. ‘Advisers, counsellors or executive officials… as well as civilian personnel’, stayed or returned to mainland Congo as part of ONUC, many with the express intention of interfering in ONUC’s operations. Belgian technicians were also assigned to radio stations in Congolese cities where they instructed Congolese trainees. On occasion, this training led to the education of Congolese radio technicians in Brussels, who

122 UNA, S-0845-0001-03-00001, ‘Meeting between UN Military Representatives and Representative of the Belgian Army at 0930 hours, 13 August 1960 at Elizabethville’, p. 59
123 van Reybrouck, Congo, p. 311
125 UN Doc, S/4475, ‘Third Report by the Secretary-General’, p. 2.
returned to Leopoldville to cease Congolese radio broadcasts in the four main indigenous languages.\textsuperscript{127} Radio was the main mode of communication available and its accessibility, especially during a conflict, was limited by Belgian interference. There were also reports of Belgian radio operators ‘commit[ting] acts of physical sabotage of radio-electrical equipment’.\textsuperscript{128} Official UN progress reports also noted the level of Belgian obstruction in the delivery of technical assistance reports and information to Congolese ministry officials.\textsuperscript{129} UN reports highlighted the prevalence of Belgian interference and demonstrated UN officials’ naïve frustration that the Belgians were not taking their role in the mission seriously, as ‘Non-Congolese advisers and experts could surely be of great value at this critical juncture’.\textsuperscript{130}

The ONUC civilian operations leadership’s decision to maintain a number of Belgians in their pre-independence roles in mainland Congo meant Belgians had continued access to the Congolese population. In meetings with Belgian capitalists in Katanga, Linnér discovered that several Union Minière workers feared losing control over Congolese natural resources to the UN. Linnér reported to Hammarskjöld that he had been told ‘that the UN aimed at driving away all the Belgians so that they could take over the business in Katanga in the interest of some other western powers’.\textsuperscript{131} Additionally, Belgian ONUC workers were conduits for anti-UN publicity within Congo and encouraged a return to Belgian administration.\textsuperscript{132} Bunche believed that Belgian technicians also spread rumours that the UN was pro-Communist, as it had purportedly condoned recent ‘atrocities in Hungary and Tibet’.\textsuperscript{133} ONUC’s absorption of Belgian technicians invited infrastructural instability within the Congo mission and provided legitimacy for the perpetuation of colonial knowledge within Congolese governance.

**Implementing a liberal internationalist civil service**

Despite Belgian technical interference, ONUC controlled the Congolese infrastructure and civil service through their international civil servants and administrative staff. Hammarskjöld recruited hundreds of international staff from specialised agencies within the UN bureaucracy for ONUC and planned to assign roles based on the expertise of their home agency. Initially designed as an ‘all-United Nations show’ with the ‘Congolese government a more or less inactive free rider’,

\textsuperscript{127} UN Doc, S/4557, ‘Second progress report to the Secretary-General’, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p. 17.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{131} UNA, S-0845-0001-03-00001, ‘Incoming Code Cable: to Secretary-General from Bunche, Leopoldville, 7 August 1960, B-380’, p. 5.
ONUC leadership emphasised the calibre of international expertise being brought into the country from the offices of the UN.\footnote{Tanner, ‘U.N. IN CONGO’, \textit{The New York Times}, 31 July 1960.} Doctors and nurses from the WHO and ICRC staffed the Health department and hospitals;\footnote{International Committee of the Red Cross Archives (Henceforth, CICR), B AG 121 229-001, ‘Letter from R. Gallopin to Pierre Gaillard’, 29 July 1960.} those from the FAO led agricultural and epidemic projects;\footnote{UN Doc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 16.} and UNESCO staff presided over the schools and Education department.\footnote{G. A. Fullerton, ‘UNESCO in the Congo’ (Paris: UNESCO, 1964).} UN special representative Rajeshwar Dayal declared it, ‘the largest civilian team they have ever had in one country at one time’.\footnote{Linnér, ‘Interview transcript’, p. 39.} 

During the early stages of the ONUC mission, Hammarskjöld inserted pro-Western personnel, often with personal ties to himself, in mid-level positions of power to choreograph the mission from the ground. Hammarskjöld placed his family friend and mining expert Šture Linnér in the executive position of Chief of Civilian Operations (also referred to as Officer-in-Charge) to further extend his control over the delivery of technical assistance. Linnér had just left a job as Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Liberian-American-Swedish Mining Company (LAMCO), which was chaired by Bo Hammarskjöld, the secretary-general’s brother.\footnote{BNA, FO 371/146779, JB2251/243, ‘UN and the Congo: report of general events’, 31\textsuperscript{st} August 1960.} The breadth of sectors desired for ONUC civilian staffing was unexpected. Linnér held executive authority over the following governmental departments: ‘Agriculture, Communications, Education, Finance, Foreign Trade, Health, Labour, Magistracy, Military Instruction, Natural Resources and Public Administration.’\footnote{Ibid.} He believed that Hammarskjöld had hired him because of his previous experience as a businessman, which had given him an unique ability to cut through red tape, but his employment suggests a culture of cronyism within the UN peacekeeping bureaucracy in Congo.

Linnér’s interpretation of the mission mandate was shaped by the political sensibilities of the secretary-general due to the unprecedented dual functions of the peacekeeping mission – civilian and military. Sir Harold Beeley, Deputy Head of the British Mission to the UN, stated in his memos to the Foreign Office that ‘The Congo debacle, indeed, is likely to turn out to be a growing point for the U.N. which is being forced to devise new techniques to deal with a situation without precedent.’\footnote{Lipsey, \textit{Hammarskjöld}, p. 308.} The motto ‘let Dag do it’ or ‘leave it to Dag’ became common parlance within the international community following the perceived success of Dag

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\item \footnote{Tanner, ‘U.N. IN CONGO’, \textit{The New York Times}, 31 July 1960.}
\item \footnote{International Committee of the Red Cross Archives (Henceforth, CICR), B AG 121 229-001, ‘Letter from R. Gallopin to Pierre Gaillard’, 29 July 1960.}
\item \footnote{UN Doc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 16.}
\item \footnote{G. A. Fullerton, ‘UNESCO in the Congo’ (Paris: UNESCO, 1964).}
\item \footnote{UNDoc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 16.}
\item \footnote{Linnér, ‘Interview transcript’, p. 39.}
\item \footnote{BNA, FO 371/146779, JB2251/243, ‘UN and the Congo: report of general events’, 31\textsuperscript{st} August 1960.}
\item \footnote{Ibid.}
\item \footnote{Lipsey, \textit{Hammarskjöld}, p. 308.}
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Hammarskjöld during the Korean War and the UNEF mission.\textsuperscript{143} Thus, belief in the expertise and legitimacy of ONUC international bureaucracy was built upon Hammarskjöld’s reputation in conflict response.\textsuperscript{144}

Colleagues from international humanitarian organisations spoke of the transnational networks accessible to Hammarskjöld for ONUC recruitment and cooperation due to his reputation and connections. An ICRC official described the level of international organisational cooperation exercised at the beginning of the mission, saying ‘exceptional circumstances…necessitate exceptional measures’.\textsuperscript{145} Hammarskjöld staffed the Congolese civil service with international civil servants and technicians to steer the nation towards a pro-Western political future. Hammarskjöld’s influence within international diplomacy and humanitarianism in New York and Geneva was, therefore, reflected in the ONUC staff deployed on the ground. UN experts directly replaced the evacuated Belgians and maintained international authority over the Congolese sectors and population.

The potential for ONUC staff’s political instrumentalisation of the mission was highlighted by Congolese voices. Lumumba had begun voicing concerns about ONUC staff’s refusal to consult with him over their technical assistance plans following the mission’s deployment in July.\textsuperscript{146} He was particularly concerned that the ONUC leadership had taken on too much authority in the governance of the country during a period of political fragility.\textsuperscript{147} Additionally, in cables sent to the secretary-general, the Association des Etudiants Congolais de Belgique warned Hammarskjöld to enforce the boundaries of the mission’s mandate as, ‘The UN cannot become a colonialist superstructure. Its Congo mission consists in safeguarding law and order and not in supplanting legal authorities.’\textsuperscript{148} Dayal noted in his first progress report to Hammarskjöld that there had been unspecified accusations that the mission was intending to replace the Belgians.\textsuperscript{149} These accusations also charged the mission leadership with attempting to construct a UN trusteeship through its administrative control of the core state sectors.\textsuperscript{150} That he chose to report this to headquarters suggests that the UN leadership recognised the negative

\textsuperscript{143} B. Urquhart, ‘The evolution of the Secretary-General’, in S. Chesterman (ed.), \textit{Secretary or General: The UN Secretary-General in World Politics} (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), p. 20.
\textsuperscript{146} UNA, S-0845-0001-03-00001, ‘Confidential: Notes on Conversation with Mr Lumumba, at 2.30p.m. on 12 August 1960’, p. 63.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{148} UNA, S-0845-0001-02-00001, ‘Private telegram from Association des Etudiants Congolais de Belgique to Dag Hammarskjöld’, 9th September 1960, p. 51
\textsuperscript{149} UN Doc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
implications of this perception of the mission and how obstructive and destructive it could be to their efforts on the ground.

Within ONUC civilian operations there emerged a fascinating paradox. The international actors intervened in the crisis, directed Congolese ‘advancement’, and maintained law and order through technical, policing, and military activities. However, international staff, like Linnér, would simultaneously break the UN’s own procedures and seemingly re-make the rules of ‘civility’ by violating the trust of an allied party in the conflict, in the name of saving lives. Linnér saw his contribution to the mission as the anti-bureaucratic cog in the vast UN machine.\(^{151}\)

Recalling one incident in Kasai, Linnér suggested that his non-UN background allowed him to ‘get the job done’ as he admitted to stealing trucks from the ANC, supposedly ONUC’s allies, and painting them with the UN emblem to deliver food aid.\(^{152}\) This deviance from UN protocol and Congolese law illustrated a disconnect between ONUC field operations and the strict procedural environment of the New York and Geneva offices. His argument that the ANC used the trucks ‘for mischief anyway’ also illustrates the tense relationship between the mission and the Congolese army, and the lack of respect he held for ANC troops. Linnér’s actions inspired similar illegal activities by his staff. ONUC staff, such as Anthony Gilpin, UN Representative in Kasai (a southern region in Congo) and assistant to the special representative of the secretary-general, used Congolese convicts to unload ONUC military equipment, including UN ‘Ferret’ armoured cars, from shipments (Fig. 16). Gilpin took personal disposal photos during his time in Congo and, as can be seen in Fig. 17, UN peacekeepers disrespected the convicts by demanding piggybacks and unpaid labour.

\(^{152}\) Ibid, p. 7.
Fig. 16. ‘Patrol to Lusambo – Unloading the UN “Ferrets” with aid of convicts’, June 1961. Photo taken by Anthony Gilpin © Bodleian Library¹⁵³

Fig. 17. ‘Patrol to Lusambo – Col. Thompson piggy-backed by convict’, June 1961. Photo taken by Anthony Gilpin © Bodleian Library¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Bodleian Library (Henceforth, Bod), MS. Photogr. c. 50, Special Collections United Nations Career Records Project, Antony Gilpin, Fol. 53.
¹⁵⁴ Bod, MS. Photogr. c. 50, Antony Gilpin, Fol. 52.
Thus, Linnér’s politics and anti-bureaucratic mindset entrenched cultures of racialised exceptionalism, humanitarian machismo, and impunity for international actors within the ONUC bureaucracy: the UN staff did not hold themselves to the standards that they claimed to be instilling in the Congolese.

The ONUC diplomats, civil servants, and experts saw the crisis as an opportunity to encourage the Congolese state to align itself with Western principles and standards. Linnér’s response to the calibre of UN staff joining the mission speaks to his desire for ONUC to exercise a ‘civilising’ influence on the Congolese population and environment. 155 Ashamed of his ‘primitive working conditions’ in Leopoldville, Linnér hoped that the ‘aristocratic’ quality of these incoming civil servants would challenge the chaos he saw in Leopoldville. 156 His delight in welcoming large numbers of international civil servants into roles vacated by Belgian colonists revealed that his conception of the conflict was grounded in racism. As James Ferguson has highlighted in his work on international development officials in Lesotho, international staff viewed the Global South as a space in which they could interchangeably apply their ‘expertise’, steering the decolonising/post-colonial nation towards ‘best practice’. 157 ONUC staff directly influenced the governance and future infrastructure of the nation and prioritised an international vision over consulting with Congolese experts. ONUC leadership dismissed most of the Congolese population as uneducated and untrained, thus perpetuating colonial prejudices, structures, and hierarchies within Congolese society. 158 The ONUC bureaucracy became a microcosm of international society; an experiment of liberal internationalist governance, rather than a force acting in support of Congolese self-determination and political agency. In combination with ‘progress’ rhetoric, the influx of international UN staff indicated that ONUC was not, as advertised by Hammarskjöld in multiple public statements, an impartial, apolitical mission. 159 160

However, the vast number of positions vacated by Belgian colonists meant that often there were not enough available international staff and many were assigned managerial roles they had little experience in and no more training than their Congolese trainees or colleagues. The ONUC staff’s perception of post-colonial Congo as a ‘blank slate’ reinforced the belief within the international bureaucracy that any and every UN employee was more qualified than any and

156 Ibid, p. 46.
157 Ferguson, The Anti-politics Machine, p. 70.
158 UN Doc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 22-23.
160 UNA, S-0845-0001-03-00001, ‘Statement by Secretary-General on Entry of Troops into Katanga’, 3 August 1960, p. 68.
every Congolese citizen. The restrictions placed on the Congolese population during colonial rule prevented most citizens from accessing education and skilled employment. This repression excluded Congolese citizens from positions of power and thus institutionalised systems of structural exploitation. Despite the intention of Secretariat staff for the mission to produce a bureaucracy of international experts, personal letters from ONUC official Anthony Gilpin note that, due to the need for such a high number of staff, ‘[ONUC] was quite evidently scraping the bottom of the barrel for some of its personnel’.\textsuperscript{161} Gilpin had extensive experience of working internationally with various UN agencies and his reflections indicate his surprise at the inappropriate appointments made for the mission. He later commented on his own lack of specialism in his role:

\begin{quote}
Apparently my job is to assist in setting up the provincial government services – an assignment for which I’ve made it clear I have no technical qualifications whatsoever! Since it will be starting from scratch, perhaps that won’t matter... one can see the whole thing as a quite astonishing experiment which has somehow got to succeed.\textsuperscript{162}
\end{quote}

For Hammarskjöld, a key part of the ONUC mission was to ensure the future integration of Congo into the liberal system. ONUC leadership emphasised from the outset that the ‘moral force’ of the mission, as invoked to UNEF troops, was intended as the first step for the Congolese state to develop into part of the liberal internationalist system,\textsuperscript{163} rather than the apolitical delivery of technical assistance described in Dayal’s progress reports.\textsuperscript{164} Dayal had been a pivotal figure in the UN’s mediation and operations in the United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL) and his core involvement in ONUC demonstrated India’s expanding participation in UN peacekeeping since its initial hesitancy regarding UNEF.\textsuperscript{165} ONUC progress reports noted that the mission’s work had ‘gone well beyond the operative phase in the past month, to the point where it is having a wider and, if conditions permit, a long-term effect on the economic and social conditions of the country’.\textsuperscript{166} Hammarskjöld announced to the Congolese government that their ‘development’ would be facilitated by alliance with the UN: ‘We are at the start of a long road. The road is your own. During the difficult first steps, we will be happy to accompany you, holding hands’.\textsuperscript{167} This state-like approach was emphasised in

\textsuperscript{161} Bod, MS.Eng.c. 4674 (fols 244-324), Special Collections United Nations Career Records Project, Antony Gilpin, Folder 247.

\textsuperscript{162} Bod, MS.Eng.c. 4674, Antony Gilpin, Folder 256.

\textsuperscript{163} UN Doc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid, pp. 26-27.

\textsuperscript{165} For more on Dayal and UNOGIL, see: S. K. Nayudu, ‘In the very eye of the storm: India, the UN, and the Lebanon crisis of 1958’, \textit{Cold War History}, Vol. 18:2 (2018), pp. 221-237.

\textsuperscript{166} UN Doc, S/PV.873, United Nations Security Council Official Records, 13/14th July 1960, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{167} UNA, S-0845-0001-03-00001, ‘UN speech to Congolese Government’, 1 August 1960, p. 80.
Hammarskjöld’s speech to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of the Congo in Leopoldville:

In view of the paramount importance of integrating the Republic [of Congo] into the great international family in a harmonious way, part of the great task which you have to face will be to explain to your people what the United Nations is, what are its ideals and goals, and that you can all find [within the UN] support in your difficulties.\(^{168}\)

The wording shows the paternalistic dynamic between humanitarian donor and recipient – the tone is ‘this is in your best interests; you’ll see’.

In order to exert further control over Congolese politicians, the ONUC leadership established a UN monopoly over the delivery of military assistance to Congo. This allowed UN staff to gatekeep which Congolese politicians could access external materiel support. The official direction of member-state-supplied aid was unilaterally under the jurisdiction of the secretary-general, although the mission was supported multilaterally. This encouraged Congolese dependence on the organisation, and cast suspicion on the motivations of member-states that tried to provide military support for the Congolese government.\(^{169}\) In one example, Mr Beeley, Deputy-Head of the British Mission to the UN, reported to the Foreign Office that a Polish cargo ship of arms was en route along the Congo River. It had been requested by the Congolese government, likely by Lumumba, and the ONUC leadership was obstructing its delivery. The cable reported:

…Bunche has ordered a United Nations unit down to Matadi, and that Hammarskjöld has sent a message to Lumumba, saying that, while he acknowledges the right of the Congo Government to import arms, he hopes that in the present circumstances they will agree to this cargo being off-loaded and held by the United Nations.\(^{170}\)

ONUC’s mandate provided the UN staff the access and authority necessary to police the host government’s private acquisition of weapons from other countries, on the grounds that it represented a threat to law and order. This approach imposed harsh restrictions on the host country; anything that could be interpreted as materiel aid to the central government would have to go through the UN first, even if the sovereign state requested the aid. This monopoly on the delivery of aid placed the ONUC leadership in a powerful gatekeeping role whereby they could control the military weight of different Congolese politicians to their advantage.

\(^{168}\) Ibid., p. 79.
\(^{169}\) UN Doc, A/RES/1474 (ES-IV), ‘Question considered by the Security Council at its 906th Meeting on 16 September 1960’.
\(^{170}\) BNA, FO 371/146770, JB 2251/33, ‘Cable from Beeley to the FO’, 17 July 1960.
The paternalism of technocracy in an age of anti-Communist anxiety

The ONUC civilian leadership expanded their control over the political life of the country through core infrastructural services, such as air traffic towers and communications systems, influencing the everyday lives of the Congolese population and the direction of the conflict. The likelihood of UN interference in Congolese politics had been predicted: ‘When the first planes had landed, UN troops at Ndjili in July 1960, a senior UN official watching them had been quoted as saying ironically: “Now the UN has its first colony”’.\(^{171}\) Gilpin commented that this was ‘an unfortunate remark which turned out to be a warning’.\(^{172}\) The paternalism and politics of colonial development projects, reinforced by the ‘triumph’ of the expert in the postwar period, paving the way for the political interference of by ONUC staff.\(^{173}\)

Frederick Cooper and Matthew Hilton have noted similar dynamics to the ONUC mission in their research on the modernising zeitgeist of colonial French and British governments in the 1940s.\(^{174}\) Cooper has argued colonial administrations emphasised the ‘technical’ aspect of the assistance and asserted that it was ‘in the name of general good’ to evade criticism, and that this was ‘later assimilated into the development framework’.\(^{175}\)

This colonial paternalistic dynamic was evident in the ONUC leadership’s approach to consulting with the Congolese population. The peacekeeping leadership attempted to blame the mission’s shortcomings or failings on Congolese ingratitude, blaming the newly independent population for the socio-economic legacies of Belgian imperialism. Hints of anti-ONUC sentiment emerged in a report of ‘diesel workers’ refusing to cooperate with UNESCO experts sent to provide emergency support.\(^{176}\) Dayal was perplexed by this rejection and concerned that the Congolese had wasted the time of UNESCO’s experts; he did not ask why the workers had declined this help.\(^{177}\) Similarly, *The New York Times* reported how a ‘quiet Congolese’ interrupted a ONUC official, who was giving a speech, and ‘broke in quietly: “Excuse me sir, may I ask you a question? Is this our country or yours?”’.\(^{178}\) ONUC leadership swept aside these examples, recording only small examples of dissent, and dismissed Congolese criticism of their various ‘reservoir[s] of goodwill’ (i.e. the public works, international staffing, and unemployment

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\(^{171}\) Bod, MS.Eng.c. 4675, Antony Gilpin, Folder 2.
\(^{172}\) Ibid.
\(^{173}\) Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*.
\(^{176}\) UN Doc, S/4557, ‘Second progress report to the Secretary-General’, p. 34.
\(^{177}\) Ibid.
Instead, reports to Hammarskjöld’s office in New York focused on how the mission was impeded by an ungrateful population. For an organisation attuned to international criticism, the UN leadership’s flippant approach to Congolese attitudes spoke to the mission’s culture of exceptionalism and technocracy.

Bunche rationalised the failures of these projects and the protests of local workers by infantilising the population, reporting to the Security Council that the mission ‘has been dropped into the midst of a country and people who are totally unprepared by experience and psychology to understand it and to appreciate its function and real worth’. These exasperated comments are analogous to the French colonial reports highlighted by Cooper in his study of postwar development in Equatorial Africa. Reminiscent of the colonial trope of the ‘ungrateful African’, ONUC leadership chose to shift the blame of failing or paternalistic projects onto the apparent refusal, or supposed mental incapacity, of some of the Congolese population to accept and appreciate assistance. Additionally, as Marie-Luce Desgrandchamps and Yolana Pringle have both demonstrated in their works on the ICRC in Kenya and Congo that a commonly held prejudice within Western internationalist circles in the late 1950s that Black Africans were too ‘psychologically primitive’ to understand ‘the notions of charity and solidarity’. Pringle demonstrates how the ICRC used this racist justification to delay their response to the Mau Mau detention camps in colonial Kenya during the 1950s. Thus, Bunche’s comments on an ‘unprepared’ people were symptomatic of a broader trend within the international humanitarian sector, whereby staff tempered organisational criticism by blaming Black populations rather than the institution’s staff, principles, and (in)action.

Technicians and infrastructural support across the country contributed to the paternalistic dynamic of a ‘backward’ country requiring ONUC’s guidance, emphasising the emergency need for educators. Linnér infantilized the Congolese politicians he engaged with and emphasised their inexperience to justify taking control of the majority of governmental sectors, noting the extent of the ‘undertaking’ and ‘patience’ of international civil servants when

179 UN Doc, S/4557, ‘Second progress report to the Secretary-General’, p. 34.
180 Ibid.
182 Cooper, ‘Modernising Bureaucrats, Backwards Africans, and the Development Concept’, p. 73.
184 UN Doc, S/4557, ‘Second progress report to the Secretary-General’, p. 1.
working with Congolese ministers.\(^{187}\) His comments reveal the culture of intellectual superiority within the ranks of the ONUC bureaucrats over the Congolese politicians, civil servants, and local population.\(^{188}\) Linnér’s policies in Congo demonstrated the vitality of the imperial trope of the ‘white man’s burden’.\(^{189}\) Again, recalling Cooper’s findings on the colonial development rhetoric, he highlights how administrators in French Equatorial Africa felt they were ‘starting from zero’.\(^{190}\) This paternalistic ‘patience’ required by international officials while attempting to ‘act on the native’ excused the failings or slowness of development projects in post-colonial Congo.\(^{191}\)

ONUC staff perceived widespread Congolese ignorance, disregarding not only the reality of educated Congolese in 1960, but also the context of colonial Belgium’s restrictions on secular Congolese education and training institutions.\(^{192}\) In his progress reports, Dayal reiterated the myth that only seventeen Congolese had graduated university by the point of independence: ‘not one doctor, no engineers, professors, architects, etc., and few, if any, qualified lawyers’.\(^{193}\) Similarly, when the Director-General of UNESCO visited Leopoldville in August 1960 to scope the educational necessities of the country, he emphasised the emergency, arguing that, ‘these requirements are apparently the biggest and most difficult that have ever been submitted to UNESCO,’ with a preliminary survey suggesting that UNESCO may need to ‘recruit something like 1,600 technicians’ to support the new academic year.\(^{194}\) The international belief in the incompetence of the Congolese was chronic within the ONUC leadership and the implications of this myth are still visible in modern representations of post-independence Congo.\(^{195}\)

Herbert Weiss, among other historians of Congolese society, has argued that this perception was incorrect and based on a Western definition of educational qualifications. He pointed out that:

There were what one could call university level graduates from the seminaries or even MA level graduates if one compares them to Americans with secular education…there were 3,000 Congolese alive at

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\(^{188}\) Ibid.

\(^{189}\) For more on the ‘white man’s burden’ as a humanitarian impulse, see: W. Easterly, The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good (London: Penguin Books, 2006).

\(^{190}\) Cooper, ‘Modernising Bureaucrats, Backwards Africans, and the Development Concept’, p. 73.

\(^{191}\) Ibid.


\(^{193}\) UN Doc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 22.


\(^{195}\) Brian Urquhart, Personal Assistant to the Secretary General, was recorded as part of the United Nations Intellectual History Project. He stated, ‘The Congo was in the first place, a Belgian territory. It also had a very complex infrastructure, it was extremely rich, the Congolese had no training, there was nothing above a sergeant in the army, and there were only 17 Congolese with university degrees.’ This myth was discussed further in Wilson Centre, ‘The Congo Crisis, 1960-1961: A Critical Oral History Conference’, 28 November 2011.
that time, who had reached the level of ‘Grande Seminare’ which, in our terms, can be compared to our MA level.\textsuperscript{196} Although Belgian restrictions on Congolese education were considerable within the secular state system, a significant percentage of the Congolese population received education from missionaries, with boys’ and girls’ Catholic schools established across the country in the late colonial state.\textsuperscript{197} Weiss’s argument contrasts with the reports from the ground in 1960, which highlighted the ‘urgent’ lack of educated Congolese and ignited calls for UN specialised agencies to devote their international staff to the state-building effort.\textsuperscript{198}

The political power vacuum of September 1960 further entrenched a culture of technocratic and racial paternalism into the ONUC bureaucracy. Kasavubu and Lumumba’s coalition collapsed, following heightened rumours surrounding Lumumba’s correspondence with Khrushchev, despite the politicians having initially united over their shared desire to bring about Congolese independence.\textsuperscript{199} Kasavubu’s decision to illegally remove the democratically elected Lumumba was rejected by the majority of both Congolese houses of Parliament and Lumumba’s call for Kasavubu’s resignation swiftly followed. Despite the constitutional confusion, the secretary-general decided that, for the purposes of ONUC, Kasavubu represented the Chief (or Head of State) and, therefore, ‘the only clear legal authority’.\textsuperscript{200} ONUC technicians proved to be a crucial political tool during the crisis both for Kasavubu and his allies, and the anti-Communist leadership of ONUC, who believed Kasavubu to be the preferable leader. Although the constitutional crisis and the anti-Lumumba bias of UN staff, in particular Hammarskjöld, has received a great deal of historical analysis,\textsuperscript{201} little attention has been paid to the precise mechanisms put in place by the ONUC mission to directly interfere with the Prime Minister. Hammarskjöld and ONUC staff were keen to ensure that the man he described as a ‘Communist stooge’ would not remain as Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{202} He argued it would violate the impartiality principle in the mission’s mandate.\textsuperscript{203} Anne-Sophie Gijs has argued that Lumumba’s unpopularity within Western-allied circles was reinforced by Belgian rumours of his requests for

\textsuperscript{200} Bod, MS.Eng.c.6472 (fols 56-60), Catalogue of the papers of George Ivan Smith, 1888-1995, ‘Incoming Code from SecGen to Cordier, 6 September 1960, Number 1552’.
\textsuperscript{202} BNA, FO 371/146779, JB2251/231 225, ‘Lumumba: secretary general’s consideration of applying pressure through Dr Nkrumah, president of Ghana’, 31st August 1960.
Soviet aid during the summer of 1960. In one of his July reports to Hammarskjöld, Bunche recalled discussing these rumours with the wife of an American Consulate official. She asked, “Mr Bunche, are the Reds [underlining Bunche’s own] really coming?” I replied, mischievously and not altogether untruthfully, “My dear lady, they are here”.

Later, while visiting President Tshombe in early August, Bunche wrote to Hammarskjöld, “There was [in Elizabethville] egotism, arrogance and ignorance galore, but more evidence of graciousness than in Leopoldville”. This conviction was later shared by many within the ONUC leadership, who rallied against Lumumba during August and resented his criticisms of the peacekeeping mission.

ONUC leadership, in particular Linnér, supported Kasavubu’s coup. Linnér and Kasavubu had developed a friendship as a result of Linnér’s involvement in the reorganisation of the Congolese civil service. Linnér recalled how, in August, Kasavubu asked him for a map of Congo and instructed him to plan how the country would look with additional administrative units. This plan matched Kasavubu’s plan to create a seventh province in Congo – a source of disagreement between the two Congolese leaders. Liu argued that new UN special representative Andrew Cordier was also aware in August of Kasavubu’s intentions to remove Lumumba, despite ONUC’s mandate to stabilise the region. To Kasavubu’s question of how to ‘make a coup d’état’, Linnér responded, ‘that’s easy, you avoid violence; you take over the radio station; you take away the man you want to replace, feed him well; you don’t go into any excesses of any kind, no physical harm of any kind.’ However, Kasavubu did not need to take over the radio stations; the ONUC technicians were already in place. Although Kasavubu was frequently publicly critical of the mission, these insights into his personal interactions with the upper echelons of the UN mission indicate a political alliance that belied the impartiality of the mission mandate.

Hammarskjöld’s dislike of Lumumba was encouraged within Western diplomatic circles. The British Mission to the UN representative, Beeley, encouraged the Foreign Office to support

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Hammarskjöld in his attempts to exclude Lumumba from all positions of power. Foreign Office notes state that, ‘Mr Hammarskjöld is clearly inclined to back [Kasavubu] and to treat his government as the only legal one’ despite international outcry in support of Lumumba’s democratic sovereignty following the coup.\(^\text{213}\) British diplomats decided to treat the situation ‘very carefully’, as they recognised that vocal British support for Kasavubu would attract the attention of the USSR, ‘and defeat our own purpose by strengthening M. Lumumba’s hand and encouraging his Soviet backers.’\(^\text{214}\) Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Archibald Ross suggested, ‘that it was better not to applaud every time Kasavubu asserted himself against Lumumba’.\(^\text{215}\) Thus, Western circles recognised that Hammarskjöld and ONUC staff on the ground were not only politically aligned to Kasavubu, but actively invested in the removal of his rival and perceived ‘source of instability’.\(^\text{216}\)

The leadership wielded immense power over sectors such as communication and air travel, which held particularly strategic importance during the constitutional crisis. The mission’s staffing of the radio and communications systems allowed them to control ‘official’ information across the country, to Kasavubu’s benefit. Additionally, the mission’s operating of the air traffic control systems meant that ONUC technical staff could restrict the movement of politicians and civilians across the country.\(^\text{217}\) This control became a tool for political intervention throughout September as Cordier repeatedly ordered the closure of Manono, Leopoldville, and Elizabethville airports as well as the local radio station, Radio Léopoldville.\(^\text{218}\) His justification was that closing these facilities, as well as airfield resources, would prevent the spread of violence from city-to-city.\(^\text{219}\) However, two small planes piloted by Belgians were able to take off from Elizabethville airport on 10th September, during the ONUC ban on air traffic, and refuel at an airfield in Kamina that was being held by an Ethiopian battalion of ONUC, despite protests from UN official Ian Berendsen.\(^\text{220}\) This act of defiance from Katangan Belgians ignited further anger from Lumumba and his supporters in response to the so-called travel ‘ban’. On 12th September 1960, Lumumba instructed his followers to attempt to regain control of these spaces, triggering further tensions.\(^\text{221}\) Despite his short time on the ground, Cordier intensified politically-motivated


\(^{214}\) Ibid.

\(^{215}\) Ibid.


\(^{217}\) UN Doc, S/4531, ‘First Progress Report to the Secretary General’, p. 17.


\(^{219}\) Ibid.


violence during the constitutional crisis. Indeed, scholars such as Carole Collins have argued that his decision had wider ramifications for the future political turmoil in the country and the development of Mobutu’s authoritarian regime in 1965.\textsuperscript{222}

In response to the closure of airports and the radio station, many anti-colonial groups and diplomatic representatives from Ghana, Guinea, and Tunisia wrote to Hammarskjöld, reminding him of the mission’s impartial mandate.\textsuperscript{223} Dennis Phombeah, President of the Committee of African Organisations,\textsuperscript{224} wrote that he was, ‘Convinced ONU taking sides in Congo [sic]. Demand you free radio and all airfields immediately repeat immediately’\textsuperscript{225} The Hungarian government also complained that the ONUC technician’s occupation of the national broadcasting station ‘openly intervened in the internal affairs of the country’\textsuperscript{226} The use of military force to close Leopoldville airport was stark, considering Hammarskjöld’s refusal to use of force in Katanga for the same reason.\textsuperscript{227} Additionally, activists such as \textit{Le Congrès d’Association des Juristes Démocrates}, a Paris-based group, telegraphed its shock,

that today, following the intervention of UN forces, the Congolese government, which has never been put in the minority by the Congolese chambers, has been reduced to powerlessness by the authorities of the UN who deprived him of the use of national radio and airfields.\textsuperscript{228}

In the midst of the political crisis, many groups sought to remind Hammarskjöld that Lumumba was the lawful Prime Minister of Congo and any attempt to prevent him accessing Congolese spaces was a direct breach of his sovereignty and contrary to ONUC’s impartiality.

Although not officially in sovereign control of the country, Cordier’s actions provoked international accusations that the UN had sought to use the power vacuum of the constitutional crisis to transform Congo into a UN trusteeship.\textsuperscript{229} Pitman MP reported to the House of Commons that confusion surrounding UN sovereign control had led to the ONUC mission shouldering greater responsibilities for the safety and maintenance of facilities, such as the airports, that would typically be under the jurisdiction of the sitting government. He recalled how in, ‘late August the American Ambassador in Leopoldville, Mr. Timberlake, was reported as,

\begin{itemize}
  \item Collins, ‘The Cold War Comes to Africa’, p. 246.
  \item Liu, ‘Interview transcript’, p. 32.
  \item For more on Phombeah and his career during decolonisation, see J. R. Brennan, ‘The Secret Lives of Dennis Phombeah: Decolonization, the Cold War, and African Political Intelligence, 1953–1974’, \textit{The International History Review} (2020).
  \item UNA, S-0845-0001-02-00001, ‘Cable: UNATIONS RC19 UX5845 OPH3874’, 7 September 1960, p. 53
  \item UNA, S-0845-0001-02-00001, ‘Cable: UNATIONS DS41 T196 BUDAPEST 149 14 1102’, 14 September 1960, p. 47.
  \item UNA, S-0845-0001-03-00001, ‘Statement by Secretary-General on Entry of Troops into Katanga’, 3 August 1960, p. 2.
  \item Dunn, \textit{Imagining the Congo}, p. 99.
\end{itemize}
“sharply protesting that US aircraft would not land any more at the Congo airports until… the United Nations could guarantee adequate military protection for the aircraft and their crews”

Timberlake’s point prompted Pitman to ask the House: ‘Who is responsible for the safety of aircraft landing? Is it really the United Nations and not the Government of the country concerned?’

Cordier’s decision to close Leopoldville’s airport and its radio station shook what had been virtually unanimous international support of the ONUC mission, as seen in the passing of the initial resolution, and shifted perceptions of the UN leadership’s intentions in Congo.

The access provided to the ONUC technicians by infrastructural jobs in airports and broadcasting stations swiftly became a diplomatic issue for contributing nations. The United Arab Republic (UAR) deployed troops to the ONUC mission in August, but following the perceived failure of ONUC staff to accept Lumumba’s legal standing as Prime Minister of Congo, the UAR leadership withdrew their troops from United Nations command. Egyptian leader, Nasser, and Syrian military commanders established the political union on 1st February 1958 as a demonstration of Pan-Arab unity. Although the UAR continued to host UNEF for another seven years, UAR leaders criticised ONUC’s manipulation and instrumentalisation of Congolese infrastructure in support of Kasavubu and his main political ally, Mobutu. The British embassy in Cairo wrote to the Foreign Office to inform them that all their private documents relating to UAR’s decision emphasised the role of ONUC’s closure of Leopoldville airport and broadcasting station as the primary reasons for their withdrawal of support and troops from the ONUC mission.

The UAR representative argued that Cordier’s actions had created ‘suspicion of bias against Lumumba’. The UAR Minister of State, Abdul al-Qadir Hatim, publicly confirmed these motivations for the decision and described the UN technicians within the airport and radio stations as participating in an ‘occupation… [constituting] a grave menace to the independence and unity of the Congo’.

Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah also criticised the overt ‘partisanship’ of the mission against Lumumba, but was conflicted as it had been Ghanaian troops that occupied Radio Léopoldville. ONUC’s decision-making in September shifted international perceptions of the mission for the international community and, in particular, contributing nations. For an organisation that relied upon the operational donations

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233 Ibid.

234 Ibid.

of troops and funds from its member-states, criticism from contributing nations threatened the operational stability of not only ONUC but also future missions.

ONUC staff limited the capacity for self-determination within the political sphere in Congo by closing airports and radio stations, illustrating the thriving culture of superiority within peacekeeping missions. Hammarskjöld’s recruitment choices shaped an international civil service that institutionalised imperial paternalism. These mid-level officials perpetuated a colonial policy of infantilization towards the Congolese population, taking a tone of ‘it’s for your own good’. As Mark Duffield and Vernon Hewitt have argued, international actors saw the tutelage of more progressive social systems and bodies over less developed ones as justifying, during crisis and emergency, coercive action to compel (and defend) a liberal way of life.  

Similarly, scholars such as Michael Barnett have examined the paternalism at the core of liberal internationalist practice: ‘humanitarian governance operates with an emancipatory ethic that can justify and even legitimate acts of domination’. In ONUC leadership’s attempts to support a political figure believed to be more sympathetic to the West, they deliberately denied Lumumba – and his supporters – access to Congolese infrastructure and dismissed the wishes of the Congolese population. These decisions revealed the ONUC leadership’s willingness to not only occupy but also to instrumentalise the governmental activities of another nation to suit their own political preferences.

The ONUC mission continued to attract international criticism and controversy throughout its operations from 1961-1962, damaging the UN’s reputation (particularly with Afro-Asian nations) and spiralling into a financial crisis for the organisation. In response to Cordier’s closures of the airports and radio-stations, the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) created a fund in November 1960 to counteract post-colonial states’ economic dependence on the UN and ensure autonomy from the organisation. Katherine McGregor and Vanessa Hearman have argued that this fund was set up ‘because after the events of Congo [Afro-Asian nations] no longer trusted the UN’. The kidnap and murder of Patrice Lumumba and two of his colleagues by Katangan leadership and CIA officers in January 1961, further fuelled distrust in Afro-Asian nations and prompted international riots and protests

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239 Ibid.
240 For more detail on the actors involved in the assassination of Lumumba, see L. de Witte, The Assassination of Lumumba (London: Verso, 2001).
against the ONUC mission. Outside the UN building in New York and across European cities, demonstrators blamed UN leadership for failing to protect the Prime Minister. Sixty men and women, mostly Black, interrupted the Security Council session with signs such as ‘Murder Inc., Hammarskjöld, Ralph Bunche, Kasavubu, Tshombe, Mobutu’ and ‘Imperialists – Lumumba’s blood is on your hands’. Three hundred protestors later marched through midtown Manhattan. In response to Lumumba’s death, ONUC leadership reenergised their military operations in order to restore control over the political conflict in Congo, focusing on restoring law and order in Katanga. In February 1961, the Security Council authorised the expansion of ONUC’s military functions in Congo and by September the mission leadership had launched Operation Morthor (Hindi for ‘smash’) to eliminate mercenaries from the southern region. However, the violence swiftly escalated into open warfare once the ONUC troops seized control of Elizabethville and Hammarskjöld decided to personally mediate the situation. As Hammarskjöld travelled to visit Tshombe in neutral territory, his plane was shot down by a Belgian mercenary near Ndola, Northern Rhodesia, on 18th September 1961. The resulting shock and fallout within the UN was felt on the ground within the ONUC bureaucracy as the ONUC troops struggled to contain the violence in Katanga, threatening the stability of the nation and revealing the impotence of the mission. Hammarskjöld’s death brought further instability to the organisation and attracted greater international scrutiny to the peacekeeping practices and military presence in Congo; the mission staff were no longer trusted to make the ‘correct’ decisions.

The Security Council’s appointment of U Thant in November 1961 prompted a shift in ONUC’s approach from defensive to offensive and the mission expanded its military functions once more, suggesting Thant would be more reactive to the demands of the Afro-Asian bloc than Hammarskjöld had been. However, from December 1961, the expense of the mission in

243 Ibid.
244 There is extensive literature on the role of mercenaries in Katanga, including memoirs and interviews. For a useful overview of their political contribution to the Congo Crisis and the shift towards authoritarianism under Mobutu, see L. de Witte, ‘The suppression of the Congo rebellions and the rise of Mobutu, 1963–5’, The International History Review, Vol. 39: 1 (2017), pp. 107-125.
247 Most recent evidence suggests that Hammarskjöld’s plane was shot down by a Belgian RAF pilot acting on behalf of a Katangan mercenary group. See E. Graham-Harrison, et al., ‘Man accused of shooting down UN chief: “Sometimes you have to do things you don’t want to…”’, The Observer, 12th January 2019.

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Congo became a source of criticism from multiple member-states, in particular the United States, as they criticised Thant for not being able to end the violence in Congo despite the expanded mandate. With financial, geopolitical, and military pressures mounting in spring 1962, and the reputations of Thant and the organisation at risk, the UN Secretariat staff waited for a conflict that would provide the conditions in which the UN could demonstrate its value in peacebuilding and international diplomacy. In May 1962, Thant requested Hammarskjöld’s files on the West Papua dispute, following a series of violent skirmishes in the Pacific between the Dutch and Indonesian armies, and decided to intervene in the crisis in order to deescalate and control the situation before it grew to Congolese proportions.

Conclusion

This chapter emphasised the central role of ONUC bureaucrats in influencing the direction of the conflict and political future of Congo, notably by initially supporting Kasavubu to remove Lumumba from power. Motivated by a paternalistic desire to educate Congolese elites, UN staff replaced Belgian administrators and technicians, believing that Congolese instability was due to ‘intense inter-tribal conflict’ rather than a legacy of colonial administration and oppression. They thus revived colonial infrastructures and modes of governance, disconnecting the peacekeeping staff from the aspirations and experiences of the local population and making them unable to recognise the psychological or political impact of peace operations, particularly their close resemblance to a foreign invasion or occupation. As reported in The New York Times, ‘The reaction of the Congolese [to the arrival of the UN staff was] nascent resentment over not being masters in their own house any more than before the departure of the Belgians’.

In attempting to orchestrate Congo’s future, the ONUC leadership revealed a desire to paternalistically interfere in the governance of a sovereign nation. The apolitical image of international technical aid quickly wore away to reveal an experiment in nongovernmental state-building.

The intervention of the UN in this crisis, and the leadership’s concerns with maintaining the unity of Congo, corresponded to the secretary-general’s vision of a post-colonial liberal member-state with an anti-Soviet stance. ONUC’s political intervention in September 1960 was

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249 UNA, S-0876-0001-06-00001, ‘Confidential Note on Hammarskjöld Files from Thant to Engers’, May 31st 1962.


251 UN Doc, S/4557, ‘Second progress report to the Secretary-General’, p. 29.

compounded by Hammarskjöld’s refusal to use force in response to the Katangan secession and Belgian presence in the south; the secretary-general’s political intentions were manifested in infrastructural interference in order to obstruct Lumumba and his supporters.\footnote{253 T. F. Brady, ‘Lumumba Angered by Use of Whites as Katanga Force: Assails Hammarskjöld stand that U.N. will not help to subdue secessionists’, \textit{The New York Times}, 14th August 1960.} This position pushed the ONUC leadership to interfere in the political milieu in Congo, igniting domestic and international resentment towards the mission and, more broadly, the UN peacekeeping project. Thus, the mission perpetuated late imperialism in its delivery and rationalisation of civilian operations in Congo: the ONUC leadership characterised their presence as part of a benevolent strategy to forge a modern, progressive state that would be given a seat and a vote within the General Assembly. The Congo mission allowed UN peacekeeping staff to intervene in a newly independent nation and offered mid-level bureaucrats an environment in which to experiment with non-state governance and post-colonial international administration; experiences that UN staff, such as U Thant and Bunche, would then take into the UNTEA mission in West Papua and UNFICYP in Cyprus.

3. Operationalising Paternalism in West Papua, 1962-1963

As the military strategies of the peacekeeping mission in Congo attracted increasingly negative attention in the global media, the UN fought to restore its reputation, in particular within the Afro-Asian bloc, as a guardian of international peace and security. It was in this context of institutional anxiety and escalating external pressure that the organisation deployed a peacekeeping mission to West Papua in 1962. General Assembly resolution 1752 (XVII) authorised the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA), also referred to as ‘Auntie’, in September 1962 following an agreement brokered between the Netherlands and Indonesia by the UN secretary-general. The parties to the Agreement gave the UN sovereign control of West Papua for seven months. This mission was the organisation’s first international territorial administration since its forebear organisation, the League of Nations, occupied the Saar in 1920. It differed from the Suez mission, shifting from a military emphasis to an

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3 UN Doc, ‘1752 (XVII) Agreement Between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands Concerning West New Guinea (West Irian)’ [available at: https://documents-dds- ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/192/60/IMG/NR019260.pdf?OpenElement accessed on 07/12/2018].
4 Ralph Wilde argues that, ‘Despite the exceptionalist suggestions made by some commentators, international organisations have been involved in the conduct of territorial administration since the start of the League of
administrative mandate. The military activities were completed by Pakistani troops deployed to the sister mission, the United Nations Security Force (UNSF), which concentrated on policing and maintaining law and order, rather than full-scale warfare as in UNEF and ONUC. The UNTEA mission also diverged from ONUC in its size and scale: the number of staff on the ground for UNTEA/UNSF was 10 percent of those deployed to ONUC, with 1,500 Pakistani troops and around 600 civilian staff. The Straits Times reported that only twenty international staff arrived in October 1962, excluding Indonesian and Dutch UNTEA staff, to take over administration of the territory. Despite these differences in the size and scope of UNTEA and ONUC, the UNTEA peacekeepers’ perception of the Papuan population was underpinned by similar racial prejudices and beliefs in the superiority of certain ethnic groups over others.

The West Papua dispute demonstrated that the UN’s international relations paradigm was fundamentally challenged by decolonisation processes and the increasing territorialisation of political identity. As more colonial nations achieved independence, many sought to expand their borders and make claims on neighbouring or proximate regions. In the post-colonial international order, imperialist ambitions and military aggression were no longer restricted to European and American nations. Although there was vocal anti-colonial rhetoric emerging from the General Assembly and UN Committees during the early 1960s, some of the most dominant anti-colonial governments – such as Indonesia – simultaneously repressed independence campaigns in West Papua and East Timor for political gain. This hypocrisy muddied the waters of anti-colonial voting alliances in UN forums and resulted in a lack of unity between UN delegates, member-state representatives, and UN staff on the question of self-determination for secessionist or independence movements. Post-colonial states’ expansionist aspirations translated into protracted disputes requiring the attention of the UN Secretariat. Conflicts such as the Eritrean separatist movement from Ethiopian rule in 1961, the Kenya-Somali frontier debates in 1963, the annexation of the Western Sahara by Morocco in the mid-1970s, and the Indonesian occupation of East Timor in 1975 repeatedly tested the UN leadership on the principles of their own Charter as anti-colonial rhetoric was deployed by neo-colonial states.

Nations… The first plenary international territorial administration [project was] the Saar in 1920 (in the League era)’ in Wilde, International Territorial Administration, p. 60.
The structure of the UN in the postwar context encouraged an international order whereby only nation-state status could provide access to the forums of global decision-making. For minority or indigenous groups within post-colonial territories, the evolving nation-state international order required them to immediately develop a popular nationalist movement or be recolonised. This re-constructed regional allegiances, instrumentalised pre-colonial heritage for post-colonial claims, and presented only the protection of nationalisation to those who refused re-colonisation.

Meanwhile, on the ground, UN peacekeepers made decisions in the interests of the organisation’s international reputation rather than protecting the rights of the indigenous Papuan population. The peacekeeping administration’s perpetuation of racist and infantilising stereotypes about Papuan society was reinforced by organisational pressure to complete the transfer from Dutch to Indonesian sovereignty and the racialised dynamic of intervening for the purposes of governance, as seen during ONUC. The UN Secretariat prioritised Western-bloc anxieties over the indigenous population’s right to self-determination and placated Indonesia to avoid conflict in Asia. This policy also thwarted Papuan attempts to seek aid or political recourse from their own government (i.e. UNTEA) or neighbouring countries.11 UNTEA’s mid-level staff assumed a paternalistic gatekeeping role previously held by the colonial Dutch authority, characterising the population as ‘underdeveloped’ and unready for self-determination.12

In September 1962, the UN General Assembly delegates feared that the organisation was under threat and emphasised the need to re-establish member-states’ confidence in the UN’s operational capabilities following the death of Dag Hammarskjöld in September 1961.13 The new acting secretary-general, U Thant, immediately faced multiple complicated crises in addition to existing financial and operational dilemmas. This institutional pressure was compounded by an outpouring of criticism following a series of controversial military manoeuvres during the Congo mission. ONUC had marred the perceived capability and credibility of the organisation’s decision-making in the field and the UNTEA mission was an opportunity for the organisation to reassert its expertise in terms of conflict response.

The concept of an international ‘trusteeship’ or ‘protectorate’ of West Papua had existed for some time. Indonesian diplomats based in the Dutch Embassy suggested an international

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arrangement in 1959 but took no formal steps towards negotiations. The Dutch and Indonesian governments had initially shown no intention of compromising on their aims for the future of West Papua. Indonesia’s successful independence campaign in 1949 had strengthened resentment between the countries as West Papua remained under Dutch rule, despite Indonesia’s request to absorb the territory. At the end of the 1950s, the diplomatic dispute erupted into violence in the Pacific. Vincent Kuitenbrouwer has highlighted this volatile context and described it as ‘the brink of war’ with ‘skirmishes [claiming] the lives of dozens of soldiers on both sides’. The secretary-general’s involvement in the negotiation process and resolution of the dispute were hard-won victories for Thant. He arranged that the mission would be financed equally by Indonesia and the Netherlands, which provided the UN with some much-needed fiscal respite. Thus, the success of the new secretary-general in unifying the two countries’ outlook on the territory and avoiding the outbreak of war was significant at a time when he was also mediating the missile crisis in Cuba.

This chapter examines the decision-making processes of mid-level UN peacekeepers and demonstrates the experimental character of the UNTEA mission. Investigating the international personnel of the UNTEA headquarters, particularly the UNTEA administrator Djalal Abdoh and regional divisional commissioners, nuances understandings of information exchange within the UN from the field to the headquarters in New York. The politics of the personnel and the management of UN staff’s previous knowledge and experiences were integral to peacekeeping practices during the West Papua mission. Just as in ONUC, with Linnér’s background in mining encouraging his anti-bureaucratic attitude to Congolese administration, Abdoh’s experience and politics shaped his approach to Papuan independence. This chapter also unearths the influence of UNTEA staff in the field as they dismissed Papuan activists’ demands for independence and reports of Indonesian coercion to enable a smooth completion of the mission mandate. Grounded in pervasive cultures of racism and insularity, the UNTEA staff were complicit in the annexation, or re-colonisation, of the Papuan population as the territory was brought under Indonesian rule without consultation.

Historiographies of Indonesian foreign policy, Papuan nationalism, and decolonisation

Although recent works have explored the effects of decolonisation on the UN, there has not yet been the same scholarly attention paid to the effects of UN peacekeeping on processes of decolonisation.19 Existing scholarship on the mission has tended to focus on the state-actors involved in the crisis, such as Dutch and Indonesian politicians, reducing the UN peacekeepers to puppets of the incoming government.20 Challenging these interpretations, this chapter shifts attention to the UNTEA administration and its dismissal of claims to self-determination made by the Papuans. It demonstrates that the UNTEA staff actively silenced Papuan activism at a crucial point in the territory’s political history.

Focusing on the logic and operations of the UNTEA peacekeepers exposes continuities between colonialism and UN operations, particularly how peacekeepers perpetuated racialised generalisations of the indigenous population to the wider international community. Ralph Wilde calls for greater analysis of colonial continuities within international territorial administrations that are not limited to scholarship on ‘language echoing the colonial paradigm’ but examine practices in the field.21 Wilde’s work has greatly influenced this research’s concentration on field-based practices. Wilde argues that studies of international territorial administrations are often described as colonial ‘provocatively, without much examination’ or ‘axiomatically, assuming a connection’ between colonialism and territorial administration ‘by way of a prelude to a detailed analysis of the nature of the powers being exercised’.22 Therefore, this chapter challenges these axiomatic assumptions and investigates the manifestations of colonial prejudices and knowledge within the UNTEA bureaucracy. It does so by attending to the views and activities of the UNTEA staff.

International histories of South East Asia in the twentieth century have often identified the West Papua dispute as a core issue for Indonesia’s revolutionary politicians, as they cultivated their anti-colonial image for the post-colonial global order and the non-aligned movement.23 Some scholars have characterised Indonesian foreign policy as retributive and tenacious,

21 Wilde, International Territorial Administration, p. 291.
22 Ibid.
following the state’s independence in 1949 from the Dutch East Indies, as they pursued the annexation of West Papua and East Timor. Indonesian diplomats are characterised as focused on Indonesian dominance, by any means necessary.24 Pieter Drooglever, for example, has argued that the West Papua dispute between the Netherlands and Indonesia was extended by a persistent Indonesia, whilst the (poorly executed) intention of the Netherlands was, predominantly, to ‘develop’ the Papuan population until it was deemed ‘ready’ for independence.25 By contrast, Robert Elson (followed by a new generation of scholars of South East Asia) has challenged the general lack of nuanced in approaches to the complex evolution of Indonesian nationalism in the Dutch East Indies.26 Indonesia’s claim to West Papuan territory was grounded in their shared colonial experience, rather than a purely imperialistic impulse. Elson and his followers have argued that by divorcing the Indonesian colonial memory from its attachment to the West Papua conflict, historians like Drooglever have constructed unrealistic, unflattering characterisations of Indonesian politicians’ intentions towards the territory and rendered the Dutch imperialists as sympathetic, if disorganised, figures. This revisionist literature has encouraged a more comprehensive understanding of the Indonesian government in its expansionist activities towards the Papuan population, contextualising its efforts to annex the territory as part of its decolonisation, rather than from solely imperialistic motivations. The political complications of the Indonesian government’s claim to West Papua, and their depiction – during the Bandung Conference – of the annexation as a final step in Indonesia’s independence process,27 contributed to the Afro-Asian nations’ struggle to determine their allegiances during this dispute.28 This literature has not only nuanced conceptions of the Indonesian government’s motivations towards West Papua, but also provided insight into the mechanisms of Afro-Asian solidarity in the 1950s and 1960s. Indonesia’s claim to West Papua was not blindly supported; rather, the vote was the result of an extensive lobbying campaign that emphasised anti-colonialism and their own independence process.

26 The total lack of Indonesian and Papuan voices in many Dutch histories has led to a narrative of the conflict in which ‘the Indonesian side of the story is presented in essentially ahistorical and sometimes puzzling terms which inevitably cast the Indonesian actors as stubborn and unyielding belligerents who have no sense of the noble virtues of self-determination and fairness’. See R. E. Elson, ‘Marginality, morality, and the nationalist impulse: Papua, the Netherlands and Indonesia: a review article’, Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden (2006), p. 4.
28 For more on the Brazzaville vote, see Kluge, p. 10; Kuitenbrouwer, pp. 319-320.
Scholarship that has examined the role of the UN within the West Papua dispute has predominantly concentrated on the role of the organisation in the fraudulent plebiscite or ‘Act of Free Choice’ held by Indonesia in 1969. Grace Cheng has drawn attention to the concept of ‘civilisation’ deployed by UN officials towards the West Papuan population, concentrating on the implications of this rhetoric. Her work helps to trace the repercussions of the UNTEA staff’s delegitimization strategy towards the Papuan population in the late 1960s. Similarly, John Saltford’s scholarship on the UN and West Papua has examined the operations of the UNTEA mission and the subsequent Act of Free Choice and has provided a detailed overview of the movements and diplomatic shifts during this period. However, he concentrates on how the UNTEA mission behaved in the field, rather than why. He has argued that UNTEA peacekeepers were passive in the Indonesian takeover and puppets of the Jakarta government. However, peacekeepers’ personal motivations, prejudices, and previous experiences were integral to their dismissal of Papuan political demands and their acceptance of Indonesian abuses in West Papua during the UNTEA mission. The mission leadership’s systematic dismissal of Papuan activists’ petitions and protests was integral to the UN staff’s administrative and policing practices on the island. Understanding their racist perceptions and diplomatic perspectives facilitates a better grasp of how and why peacekeepers actively silenced the Papuan population.

Dominant scholarship has traditionally neglected the voices, activities, and impact of Papuan activism on West Papuan history. Recent works in the regional historiography of the Pacific Islands have explored peripheral political activism and independence movements led by island populations during the decolonising period. Illuminating works by Tracey Banivanua Mar and Emma Kluge have traced the rhetoric and networks of these political activists within the context of Global South anti-colonialism visions during the 1950s and 1960s. Although these

31 Saltford, The United Nations and the Indonesian Takeover of West Papua.
32 This dominant scholarship judged the Papuan population as victims, passive under the rule of the Dutch or Indonesians, their history reduced to discussions over ownership and diplomatic battles. Diverse Papuan groups and politics were sidelined. See R. Chauvel, Constructing West Papuan Nationalism: History, Ethnicity, and Adaptation, Policy Studies, no. 4 (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2005); W. Henderson, West New Guinea: the dispute and its settlement (New Jersey: Seton Hall University Press, 1973).
were diverse visions led by different strata of colonised populations, with post-colonial imaginaries ranging from regional federations to Pan-African unity, West Papuan activists took inspiration from transnational campaigns across the Pacific and sought to carve out their own space within the developing anti-colonial solidarity networks. Mar’s examination of the ‘imperial remnants’ within the American State Department archives highlights the culture of racism towards Pacific communities in Western diplomatic circles and explores the political implications of this characterisation.  

Kluge has explored how West Papuan activists drew upon Western racialised conceptions of the territory, like those revealed by Mar, to forge solidarity with anti-colonial networks across the Global South. They weaponised their own discrimination to seek pan-Pacific unity with Afro-Asian anti-colonial networks and groups which were voicing similar experiences of colonialism and international organisations such as the UN. Building upon their research, this chapter examines how the UNTEA mission staff, particularly Abdoh, were influenced by Afro-Asian arguments about post-colonial sovereignty and non-intervention as an anti-colonial policy and Western circles’ racist prejudices against Pacific islanders.

There are groups of scholars who have explored Papuan political activism to challenge racist generalisations about the population. Contemporary works have highlighted the diversity of Papuan political activities during the 1950s and 1960s, focusing on the innovations of nationalist political parties (such as Partei Nationaal (or PARNA) and the Eenheidspartij Nieuw Guinea (or EPANG)), regional councils, and elite Papuan councillors during Dutch colonial rule. Although this literature has maintained the political unsophistication of the Papuan population, due to the cultural lifestyles of the population, these works simultaneously provide insight into the geographic and socio-economic diversity of Papuan political engagement from youth groups and activists outside of Hollandia, the capital city. Papuan regional councils became important interactive spaces for the UNTEA divisional commissioners during the mission and, therefore, this literature has challenged scholars, such as Richard Chauvel, Octavianus Mote, and Danilyn Rutherford, who have stated that Papuan nationalism and political activism is a recent phenomenon.  

Similarly undermining this narrative, scholars such as Ali Mohammed, Peter...
Savage, Rose Martin, Peter King, and David Webster have examined the vibrant and sustained campaigns for self-determination in towns and villages across West Papua, emerging during the 1960s.38 Muhammed and King in particular have emphasised the importance of West Papuan regional experiences in facilitating the rise of the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (the Free Papua Movement) during Indonesian rule following abuses of the Papuan population.39 Thus, these strands of literature help to undermine the UNTEA administration’s claims that nationalist political activism in West Papua was a limited, disorganised, and unrepresentative phenomenon, driven by urban Papuans’ ‘alcoholic intake’ rather than widespread Papuan political engagement.40

The West Papua dispute emerged at the height of post-colonial anxieties, hierarchies, and debates and became entangled in broader internal alliances and fantasies of the post-colonial international order. Scholars have examined the practical implications of multiple self-determination campaigns and border disputes during decolonisation, resulting in hierarchies within the post-colonial international order between older and newer, smaller and larger, and better resourced and less well-resourced nations.41 For post-colonial states, protecting their internal affairs from non-intervention became a priority and integral to their ‘anti-colonial’ view of sovereignty; their experience with European colonisation prompting legal protections against further territorial or political intervention.42 Emerging in the late 1940s, the Afro-Asian bloc championed anti-colonial norms within UN forums against ‘Western powers’, but struggled to form a unified front against postcolonial states’ aggression.43 As Julie MacArthur argues, ‘debates over the practical implications of decolonisation and the meaning of sovereignty for newly independent nations consumed international discussions and threatened to derail Pan-African integration’.44 Additionally, Adom Getachew has recently shown how discussions of federalism, Pan-African, and egalitarian frameworks evolved from post-independence dilemmas over where

40 UNA, S-0682-0003-01, ‘Illegal Arrests by Indonesian Troops, 7.1.63’.
national borders should be drawn in this new era. For post-colonial states, protecting their internal affairs from intervention became a priority and integral to their ‘anti-colonial’ view of sovereignty; their experience of European colonisation prompted a desire for legal protection against further territorial or political intervention. However, the dominant post-colonial states’ conception of sovereignty conflicted with the protection of internal human rights, secessionist movements, and minority groups within independent states such as Indonesia, reinforcing a narrow definition of colonisation in the international legal lexicon and the minds of anti-colonial diplomats like Thant and Abdoh. This narrow definition of ‘colonisation’ precluded annexed populations, such as Papuans, from UN powers of oversight over non-self-governing territories, which, as Jess Pearson has demonstrated, could have acted as a source of international recourse. Post-colonial conceptions of non-interventionism encouraged an unequal distribution of sovereignty and human rights protections. This chapter will build upon this literature and explore the implications of this narrow definition on the Papuan population and their political future.

As works by Meredith Terretta, Lydia Walker, and Julia MacArthur have shown, secessionist movements and/or human rights campaigners assembled sophisticated petitioning schemes to bring attention to their counter claims to national sovereignty within international forums. This scholarship has demonstrated that decolonisation’s ‘moment of possibility’ unequally affected different populations. Some causes were internationally championed and


47 Ibid., p. 749.
others side-lined as activists campaigned for recognition in an increasingly competitive field. Walker has argued that the petitioning groups’ focus on contacting the UN, even with great awareness of the unlikeliness of a response, was due to a belief that ‘the UN [w]as the arbitrator for national independence’. Similarly, Anthony Anghie has asserted that, ‘The international human rights law that emerged as a central and revolutionary part of the United Nations period offered one mechanism by which Third World peoples could seek protection… from the depredations of the sometimes pathological Third World state’. This responsibility and power forged a rigid hierarchy as UN staff managed the inclusion – and exclusion – of marginalised voices within international forums. By building upon League of Nations and UN Trusteeship petitioning literature, this chapter illustrates how the UNTEA staff’s disengagement from Papuan independence was part of a pattern of unequal decision-making and gatekeeping authority wielded by UN bureaucrats during decolonisation.  

**Negotiating the New York Agreement**

West Papua has been historically understood as a terrain not easily aligned with modern concepts of national land borders. It is a landscape that includes highlands, lowlands and multiple small islands. Due to this topography, seventeenth century Dutch imperialists struggled to travel across the territory. Therefore, Dutch colonial administrators were unable to engage with most of the Papuan population in the years before Indonesian independence from the Dutch East Indies. Dutch colonisation of West Papua differed from the Indonesian experience. For the Indonesians, especially those on the island of Java, colonial oppression pervaded daily life throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In contrast, the majority of the West Papuan population lived independently of colonial structures and saw Dutch imperialism as a nominal arrangement. The territories’ contrasting experiences of Dutch colonialism shaped their different public memories of the period and motivations for independence, despite being ruled by the same European power. The Indonesian population characterised their national

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58 Jaarsma, ““Your Work Is of No Use to Us...””, p. 128.
60 Jaarsma, ““Your Work Is of No Use to Us...””, p. 154.
liberation campaign as one that challenged violent colonial oppression and exploitation. In contrast, most Papuan independence activists focused on preventing re-occupation. Indonesian leaders argued the unity of Indonesia and West Papua through their shared colonial identity, as part of the Dutch East Indies. However, the leadership did not appreciate the diversity of Dutch imperial practices across the Pacific and how this affected populations’ conceptions of their national identity. When Indonesian President Sukarno demanded Papuan liberation from the Dutch, during negotiations over Indonesian independence in 1949, he argued that the island of West Papua should become part of post-colonial Indonesia due to a shared colonial identity. The Dutch’s subsequent refusal to transfer the territory to Indonesia led to outrage in Jakarta. The aspiration of national unity under an Indonesian flag was thus woven into memories of Dutch imperialism. These scars ultimately served as the motivation for the emotionally charged Indonesian campaign to ‘reclaim’ West Papua, regardless of the opinions of those within the territory.

The West Papua dispute highlighted the diplomatic and territorial complications of decolonisation. Both Indonesian and Dutch diplomats lobbied for the support and votes of Afro-Asian UN member-states by providing anti-colonial arguments to justify their sovereign claims to the territory. The emotional attachment of the Indonesians to their colonial past – and present – was mirrored, in type, by the Dutch government. West Papua represented the glory of former Dutch imperial domination in the region and on the international stage. The Dutch campaign to retain West Papua was motivated by national anxiety over international relevance following Indonesian independence. Throughout the 1950s, Indonesia and the Netherlands internationalised their position regarding the sovereignty of West Papua, neither achieving universal success within the General Assembly or privately through meetings with other state delegates for their supposedly ‘anti-colonial’ position. Paradoxically, the Dutch promised self-

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62 Contrary to this Indonesian view, the opinion of most Papuans on the northern island of Biak-Numfoor was that, ‘The Papuans are not Indonesians… the Papuan country and the Papuan people have their own personality and the Papuan people [have] the right to have its own country in the same way as all the other peoples and nations of the world’. UNA, S-0884-0023-01-00001, ‘Telegram from Numfoor District Council to U Thant’, July 24th 1962, p. 30.
63 Elson, ‘Marginality, morality, and the nationalist impulse’, p. 5.
determination for the Papuan populations, following a long period of tutelage (at least a decade), if the government retained colonial oversight over the territory.\textsuperscript{70} Although some Afro-Asian bloc nations were persuaded by this promise, they argued that they would be unable to support the Dutch in the General Assembly as they could not support a colonial power.\textsuperscript{71} There was also conflict within the Afro-Asian bloc over which settlement was truly in the Papuans’ interests.\textsuperscript{72}

The Indonesians rejected the idea of Papuan self-determination as, in their eyes, West Papua achieved ‘independence’ alongside the rest of the archipelago in 1949.\textsuperscript{73} Eventually, however, most Afro-Asian states, such as Pakistan and Ghana, supported Indonesia in the General Assembly vote, suggesting the power of Afro-Asian solidarity in the aftermath of Bandung.\textsuperscript{74}

Thant’s political upbringing and career experience within anti-colonial diplomatic circles prepared him for the eruption of violence in the Pacific. When U Thant accepted the role of acting secretary-general in November 1961, he inherited Hammarskjöld’s involvement in the West Papua dispute at a point when diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia were on the verge of collapse.\textsuperscript{75} Thant had been raised in Pantanaw, British Burma, in a wealthy, highly educated family, engaged in local journalism, and politically moderate.\textsuperscript{76} Although he remained moderate during clashes between Burmese nationalists and loyalists in the 1930s, his experiences during the Japanese occupation in the Second World War made him resistant to Japanese nationalism.\textsuperscript{77}

After the war, Thant worked in the Burmese civil service alongside the new Prime Minister of an independent Burma, U Nu, who was also an old school friend. Rising quickly through Burmese politics, Thant acted as secretary for the Bandung Conference in 1955, putting him at the centre of discussions on the advancements of anti-colonialism, self-determination, racial equality, Afro-Asian solidarity, and the non-aligned movement.\textsuperscript{78} His presence at the conference exposed him to pan-Afro-Asian unity and encouraged him to connect with other international diplomats. The Bandung conference also introduced him to Indonesia’s claim to West Papua as Jakarta representatives contextualised the annexation as the final frontier of Indonesia’s struggle for independence from Dutch imperialism.\textsuperscript{79} Thus, his involvement at the


\textsuperscript{71} Webster, ‘Self-Determination Abandoned’, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{72} For more on the Brazzaville vote, see Kluge, p. 10; Kuitenbrouwer, pp. 319-320.

\textsuperscript{73} Viartasiwi, ‘The politics of history in West Papua – Indonesia conflict’, pp. 142-143.

\textsuperscript{74} Kuitenbrouwer, ‘Beyond the ‘Trauma of Decolonisation’, p. 318.

\textsuperscript{75} UNA, S-0876-0001-06-00001, ‘Confidential Note on Hammarskjöld Files from Thant to Engers’, p. 6.


\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{79} McGregor and Hearman, ‘Challenging the Lifeline of Imperialism’, p. 167.
Bandung conference and conversations around Pan-Afro-Asian unity encouraged him to see the annexation of West Papua as part of Indonesia’s post-colonial quest for unity, rather than the re-colonisation of a minority group, in solidarity with his Bandung colleagues.80 Despite his experience with Japanese occupation during the Second World War, Thant conceived of Indonesia’s claim to West Papua as part of Indonesia’s decolonisation.

His Afro-Asian connections from Bandung were desirable for the UN Secretariat as they searched for Hammarskjöld’s replacement. The recent transformation of the General Assembly membership strengthened demands for an Afro-Asian secretary-general. However, Cold War politics dictated the negotiations for selecting Hammarskjöld’s successor.81 Thant’s nomination to become the next UN secretary-general, the public face of internationalism, was conditional on his nationality’s non-aligned politics and his strong relationships with representatives from the Afro-Asian bloc. Anti-imperialist solidarity remained at the forefront of Thant’s approach to global governance as he lobbied for (and undertook) the position of secretary-general.82 Therefore, the ‘Spirit of Bandung’ not only influenced Thant’s appointment as secretary-general, but also guided his geopolitical allegiances once appointed, influencing his approach to experiences of colonialism and the threat of Communism in Asia.83 In the wake of the Congo mission controversies, Thant recognised that the UN leadership needed to improve Afro-Asian nations’ trust in the organisation and the West Papua dispute provided an opportunity to align with the nation that had hosted the Bandung Conference: Indonesia.

Following Hammarskjöld’s death, Thant ordered a report on Hammarskjöld’s existing files on West Papua.84 These files showed that Hammarskjöld had initiated contact with the Dutch government through their UN Ambassador in 1961 to discuss the possibility of UN-led mediation between the states. Thant chose to continue these discussions in the hopes of a swift solution. Thant also learnt that Carl Schurmann, the Dutch Ambassador to the UN, had insinuated that the Dutch might grant permission for UN trusteeship in the territory.85 Additionally, Thant discovered that Hammarskjöld had met with the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, Joseph Luns, to advise him on a peaceful outcome.86 Hammarskjöld encouraged Luns to consider inviting UN observers to West Papua. However, Luns’ revealed these communications

85 Ibid., p. 2.
86 Ibid.
in a speech during Parliamentary proceedings in the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament and Hammarskjöld rebuked him for his indiscretion. This marked an end to their diplomatic dialogues. In response, Dutch diplomat Theo Bot invited African representatives from the Republics of Dahomey and Upper Volta to the territory through a UN goodwill mission in April 1962. This visit was heavily choreographed in the Dutch’s favour to build a picture of the Papuans as an underdeveloped population, brought into modernity through the paternal hand of the Dutch administration. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government communicated to the American embassy in Jakarta that it was prepared to accept a period of UN authority before it assumed sovereignty in West Papua. The government suggested this on the condition that the territory would not be put under ‘trusteeship’. However, they had yet to communicate this willingness to Thant himself.

Seeking to demonstrate personal and organisational expertise in conflict response, Thant focused on resolving the conflict quickly as he ‘appealed’ to the states. Increasingly exasperated by inter-state skirmishes in the Pacific, Thant considered using the judicial weight of the UN Security Council. He suggested, under Article 40 of the UN Charter, that he should send UN observers to West Papua with the intention of scoping the UN exercising authority over the territory. Thant hoped this suggestion would cease the continued ‘aggravation of the situation’. He wrote to both state leaders on 19th December 1961, repeating his request for a peaceful solution to the territorial question. However, a naval clash mid-January in 1962 between Indonesian and Dutch ships off the coast of West Papua escalated the dispute and ignited fears of Soviet intervention. Thant solicited a ‘humanitarian gesture’ from Prime Minister de Quay of the Netherlands to release Indonesian prisoners captured during this naval skirmish and sent a UN representative to the territory to arrange the repatriation of these prisoners. Thant seized upon this thaw in Dutch-Indonesian relations and coaxed the states towards a two-stage
diplomatic solution; ‘the first phase would be secret and informal, and the second stage would be formal’.  

In August 1962, Thant led the formal negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands, building upon the preliminary, ‘exploratory’, informal talks held by Thant’s nominated representative, Ellsworth Bunker, in March of 1962. Thant approved the creation of the ‘Bunker Plan’, which encouraged the parties to agree to an UN authority in West Papua. Thant’s endorsement of this plan, evident in his private correspondence and in press conferences, guided his approach to those formal negotiations. Thant’s communication with President Sukarno and Prime Minister de Quay expressed the united front of those acting under the aegis of the UN in solving the dispute. Bunker was in regular contact with the secretary-general as he recognised that his role was ‘under [Thant’s] aegis’ rather than that of the UN, or even the US; he was present ‘at [Thant’s] request and as [Thant’s] representative’. Thant argued in his memoir that his involvement in the informal negotiations was to keep both states at the negotiating table in order for the formal negotiations to settle the dispute. Thus, although he was more involved with the second stage of the negotiations, Thant, and his diplomatic weight as secretary-general, was integral to the informal negotiations held by Ellsworth Bunker and the formal talks held in August 1962.

West Papua’s re-colonisation was a shared calculation by those interested in preventing further Soviet aggression in the Pacific. By August 1962, US President John F. Kennedy was concerned about the potential geopolitical damage of an escalation in the conflict. Thant shared the American government’s anxiety over the threat of the Soviet Union in the Pacific and its ambiguous relationship with the Indonesian government. Kennedy hosted meetings with Dutch diplomats to encourage their withdrawal from the West Papua, and emphasised the strategic value of the territory for anti-Soviet interests and to ensure Indonesian support.

98 Ibid.
101 Cordier and Harrelson (eds.), Public Papers, p. 127-132.
American position was that negotiating Papuan self-determination would only serve to irritate the Indonesian government and thus threaten, ‘the entire free world position in Asia’. Despite the US and UN leadership’s public anti-colonial rhetoric, in practice colonised populations’ rights were secondary to the threat of potential Soviet interference. The secretary-general’s relationship with US actors has been over-simplified in the dominant historiographical narrative, assuming decision-making was led by US manipulation rather than Thant’s own analysis of the geopolitical climate. The role of the American government in the construction and design of the UN entrenched a close relationship between the UN Secretariat and the US government. However, Thant took over as secretary-general once the Afro-Asian bloc had diluted the diplomatic weight of the US voting power within the General Assembly. He was frustrated that the UN and US position on West Papua had ignited international suspicions that he was an American stooge; the American State Department recorded that Thant was ‘miffed at us [the Americans] on several counts’ during this period.

The prestige attached to the organisation’s involvement in the negotiations, having prevented the escalation of further Cold War tensions, was emphasised by the location of the New York Agreement’s confirmation on 15th August 1962: the UN headquarters. The New York Agreement was signed by the Indonesian and Dutch governments to outline the provisions of the UN-mandated transfer of West Papuan sovereignty. Thant’s concern over the need for a quick win in the Indonesian-Dutch negotiations was motivated both by the threat of Cold War conflict in the Pacific but was also underwritten by the organisation’s own state of crisis. The anxieties of UN staff were particularly pressing following the controversies of ONUC. This damage was specifically due to the Afro-Asian bloc’s complaints about the UN’s incompetence and untrustworthiness following the death of Lumumba and violent chaos during Operation Morthor. The ‘storm of criticism’ grew over the winter months of 1961 and into 1962, and was compounded by the 1962 financial crisis. The expense of ONUC’s operations, in addition to

110 Wertheim, ‘Instrumental Internationalism’.
113 Ibid.

UN delegates disclosed hopes that the success of UNTEA, and its lack of financial burden for the organisation, would help to reduce some of the international criticism. James F. Engers, executive assistant and under-secretary-general for special political affairs, reported to Thant that, ‘Some [delegates] believe that the recent agreement will open the way to solve other problems at the United Nations, and would restore its prestige to the United Nations’. The UN’s reputation was bound up in member-states’ perception of its reliability in upholding the interests of peace and security. Thus, the internal and external stakes for the success of the UNTEA mission, especially to restore the Afro-Asian bloc’s trust in the organisation, were elevated in October 1962.

The UN delegates and Secretariat personnel in the New York headquarters were not alone in appreciating the importance of the New York Agreement (and, therefore, the operations of the UNTEA mission) for the wider interests of the UN. The two UNTEA administrators were diplomats with extensive experience with the UN. Crucially, they were both ‘acceptable to Indonesia and the Netherlands’. The first UNTEA administrator, José Rolz-Bennett, was only on the ground for a month at the beginning of the UNTEA mission as an interim authority before arrangements were made for a more permanent representative to take over the role in November 1962. Thant recruited Dr Djalal Abdoh, an Iranian politician with close ties to the Afro-Asian movement, to represent the secretary-general in West Papua until the agreed date of transition to Indonesian sovereignty (1st May 1963). Meeting Thant in 1955 at the Bandung Conference had given Abdoh the opportunity to establish himself as a vocal delegate within the Afro-Asian bloc. He was also present at Indonesia’s speeches and heard their justification for absorbing West Papua as a final step in their decolonisation process. Like Thant, Abdoh’s involvement in the Afro-Asian solidarity movement put him in a strong position for future UN employment as non-aligned credentials increasingly became part of the vetting process for mid-level peacekeeping. He built upon this
international experience from 1956-1960 as Iranian Permanent-Representative to the UN, and in 1961 he was appointed UN Plebiscite Commissioner for the UN-organised referendum in the Southern Cameroons. These roles helped to build his international reputations as a diplomat skilled in ‘reconciling opposing factions’. His previous employment within the UN and his shared experience with the ‘spirit of Bandung’ made him a reliable colleague who Thant could trust to protect the institution’s reputation in West Papua.

The temporary nature of the mission and its fixed end-date encouraged a disconnect between international peacekeeping staff and the Papuans’ political position; the international bureaucrats kept one foot out of the door for the duration of UNTEA. The priority for the UNTEA administration was to stabilise the region and prevent inter-state violence. However, the mission did not have enough staff to govern all areas as thoroughly as initially planned. As the British Foreign Office recorded, ‘[UNTEA] has lacked adequate staff and have only been able to administer the more civilised fringes of this immense and jungly [sic] territory’. This perception then influenced the mission operations. In contrast to the administrative strategy in ONUC, which encompassed all governmental departments, the UNTEA staff neglected day-to-day administrative processes so as to focus on the diplomatic transition from Dutch to Indonesian authority. Once deployed, the UNTEA staff were keen to wrap themselves in a familiar organisational culture. One Australian reporter commented that, ‘there [was] an air of fraternity among the headquarters staff members. Drawn from all countries, they have in common an intellectual smoothness that permits their conversation to move easily from New York gossip to Papuan mating habits’. This social detachment between peacekeepers and civilians fed into pervasive cultures of racialism and intellectual supremacy within the UNTEA bureaucracy. It also encouraged UN peacekeepers to stay confined to their ‘bungalows overlooking Humboldt Bay… or at Government Hotel’ outside work hours, much like how present-day peacekeepers create their own exclusive ‘spaces of aid’ in conflict zones within UN compounds and hotels.

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123 UNA, S-0876-0001-07-00001, ‘Dr Djalal Abdoh newspaper cuttings’, p. 4.


Delegitimising Papuan political enfranchisement

The New York Agreement prevented the UNTEA staff from debating the question of Papuan self-determination. However, mid-level UN staff, particularly the UNTEA administrator and divisional commissioners, chose to acknowledge and stay updated on Papuan political activities in order to police their demonstrations and meetings. Weekly situational updates from each divisional commissioner to the administrator (Abdoh) also included analysis of political events in their area. Papuan nationalist activism made Abdoh uneasy as, within the norms of the UN, secessionist claims from post-colonial territories were not ‘legitimately national’ and threatened the credibility of the New York Agreement. For the leadership of UNTEA, it was more beneficial to legitimise and amplify racially-charged perceptions of Papuans than to engage in complex and time-intensive discussions about post-colonial sovereignty. Thus, the UNTEA administration reported mischaracterisations of Papuan opinions to Thant and his Secretariat colleagues to protect the New York Agreement.

Abdoh’s decision-making as UNTEA administrator reveals that anti-colonial diplomats conceived their own discretionary racial, political, and class standards of ‘credible’ anti-colonial activity. Bureaucrats in positions of power, like Abdoh, held the authority to prevent a population from achieving self-determination, reinforcing the existing power dynamic between UN officials and host populations. Peacekeeping missions provided fertile conditions for technocratic exceptionalism to thrive within international bureaucracies in foreign contexts. Although colonised populations deployed formal and informal strategies to attract the attention of UN officials, arbitrary standards of ‘credibility’ obstructed many peripheral populations from access to international rights networks or legal support.

An undisclosed number of UNTEA’s departmental directors and divisional commissioners were ‘persons who have served in colonial territories for a considerable part of their career’, influencing their analysis of the Papuan population. UNTEA directors’ and divisional commissioners’ experiences, practices, and ideas, amassed during colonial employment, were integral to analysis and knowledge-production within the peacekeeping bureaucracy. For the UNTEA headquarters staff based in Hollandia, the weekly situational updates from the divisional commissioners provided their only insight into the non-urban Papuan population. Abdoh highlighted his colleagues’ colonial experience and his concern about

130 For more on this dynamic, see Muschik, ‘The Art of Chameleon Politics’; Hodge, ‘British Colonial Expertise’.
some of their ‘observations and ideas’ in his report to Thant, noting that he ‘took exception’ to some of their remarks. However, he continued to use their updates to build his, and Thant’s, conception of the territory. Thus, there was a tension between Abdoh’s anti-colonial credentials and his practices as UNTEA administrator. In principle he championed the right to self-determination but, in practice, his racialised perception of which populations should be afforded that right led to his complicity in the re-colonisation of the territory.

UNTEA’s practices were driven by widespread racist rhetoric against the Papuans, as can be seen within mission communications and reports. For example, Gordon S. Carter, Divisional Commissioner for the Central Highlands, complained in his November situational update to Abdoh that he was struggling to,

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guide the faltering steps of stone-age man along the dimly lit paths of progress and enlightenment… the obligation is of course a moral one towards some 200-300,000 extremely primitive peoples…many of whom are still in the stone-age state of primitive savagery and tribal warfare.
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Divisional commissioners’ racist comments and asides were regularly woven into the ‘technical’ sections of their situational updates, while still maintaining that their judgement of Papuan society was apolitical and based on development expertise. As Victor Ray has highlighted, international organisations’ neutral, technocratic identities concealed international staff’s complicity in the social construction of race. He has argued that, ‘Organizations help launder racial domination by obscuring or legitimating unequal processes’ through technocratic or supposedly impartial rhetoric. Although Abdoh relied on divisional commissioners’ updates to compile his reports about the rural regions of West Papua, he was aware of the diverse political activism across the region due to the police reports and petitions delivered to his office in Hollandia. He selectively picked out the most generalising and racialised comments to project a specific characterisation of the territory to the secretary-general. His curation of racialised and paternalistic ‘evidence’ in his reports to Thant legitimised the UNTEA bureaucracy’s perceptions of the population and mandate. By reproducing divisional commissioners’ opinions to Thant, Abdoh encouraged an open culture of prejudice towards the Papuans and an ‘us vs. them’ mentality.

135 Ibid., p. 35.
In his first month as administrator, Abdoh instructed the divisional commissioners to consult local Papuans on their perceptions of self-determination to gauge their reception of the Indonesian takeover. He then curated and compiled their responses in a long report that he dispatched to the Secretariat in New York. The report was written for Thant but was also received by C V Narasimhan, Chef de Cabinet of the UN Secretariat, and other UN officials within the inner circle at the headquarters, including Ralph Bunche. This report was Abdoh’s assessment of the population’s general mood regarding a potential shortening of the UNTEA administration and the question of self-determination, ‘based to some extent on discreet enquiries made through the divisional commissioners’. Abdoh described the role of the divisional commissioners as ‘eyes on the ground’ for the administration to gather regional news and distribute updates to the more rural communities. Quoting a breadth of UNTEA staff and Papuans, the discretion of these inquiries is questionable. Abdoh dismissed the petitions, letters, and direct claims made by Papuan activists to UN staff as anomalies against the general political apathy of the population. Abdoh used this long report to reassure Thant that his efforts during the negotiations were supported by the situation on the ground and that the mission was fulfilling the mission mandate. This perception of Papuan disengagement from international and domestic politics has been repeated in West Papua’s historiography by scholars such as Richard Chauvel, therefore prolonging the characterisation of a disinterested population who, through their isolation, were unable to recognise, or uninterested in engaging with, whomever governed the territory.

In structuring his long report to Thant throughout the first phase of the mission, from October to December 1962, Abdoh introduced the three main strata of the Papuan population and, in turn, dismissed their political positions as unrepresentative and evidence of underdevelopment: elite, urban, and rural communities. He labelled any Papuan political engagement as illegitimate due to its unreliability or unrepresentative nature, in order to justify the mission’s decision not to publicise the treatment of activists on the island and push for the plebiscite under UN jurisdiction. However, as contemporary literature by Dutch scholars van der Kroef and van der Veur observed in the early 1960s, Papuan activist movements had developed

138 Ibid., p. 29
139 Ibid., p. 30.
140 Chauvel, Constructing Papuan Nationalism, p. 6.
across the territory throughout the 1950s and the formation of several regional political parties demonstrated the vibrancy of youthful and rural Papuan nationalist engagement.\textsuperscript{141}

Abdoh’s reports about elite Pauans are focused on their dominant characteristics as selfish and easily bought:

Irrespective of their real feelings, they try to be on the right side of the Indonesians and thereby secure their future. No wonder that they should be prone to follow whatever lead comes from Indonesia and thereby remain in the forefront of public life.\textsuperscript{142}

Thus, Abdoh generalised all elite Pauans as a group that should be totally disregarded in the UNTEA decision-making process, noting that their opinions were likely to be unquestioningly pro-Indonesian and meaningless. This disregard of the Papuan leadership and elite strata was also used by other international actors. The British Foreign Office commented that, ‘The various leaders of opinion… had now virtually all gone over to the Indonesians with whom their bread would in future be buttered’.\textsuperscript{143} Abdoh’s belief that all Papuan leaders were ‘mostly motivated by their own narrow self-interest rather than a genuine interest in a public cause’ demonstrated a disregard for the diversity of opinion within the Papuan elite class and contempt for the population he was employed to protect.\textsuperscript{144} Abdoh also ignored UNTEA’s complicity in creating an environment increasingly dominated by Indonesian soldiers, politicians, and administrators, many of whom were absorbed within the mission itself.\textsuperscript{145} To be sure, some Pauan elites, including military ‘heroes’ Marthen Indey, Lukas Rumkorem, and Silas Papare, accepted the \textit{fait accompli} of incoming Indonesian rule and supported the Indonesian unity project.\textsuperscript{146} These Pauans used this transitional period to build goodwill with Indonesian politicians in order to maintain power through the changeover.\textsuperscript{147} As the Divisional Commissioner of Merauke wrote to Abdoh, ‘Already pressure from paratroopers on local residents has made some Pauans feel it would be good for the future health to favour Indonesia now’.\textsuperscript{148} However, several Pauan leaders and important figures, such as Nicolaas Jouwe, Marcus Kaisiepo and Filiman Jufuway, adopted vocal anti-Indonesian positions and were integral to attempts at promoting the


\textsuperscript{142} UNA, S-0876-0001-07-00001, ‘Abdoh report to Thant’, December 13\textsuperscript{th} 1962, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{143} BNA, FO 371/169952, DJ 1019/4, ‘Letter from Vines to A.S. Fair in the Commonwealth Relations Office’, January 14\textsuperscript{th} 1963.

\textsuperscript{144} UNA, S-0876-0001-07-00001, ‘Abdoh report to Thant’, December 13\textsuperscript{th} 1962, p. 30.


\textsuperscript{146} van der Veur, ‘Political Awakening in West New Guinea’, p. 59.


\textsuperscript{148} UNA, S-0876-0001-07-00001, ‘Abdoh report to Thant’, December 13\textsuperscript{th} 1962, p. 38.
population’s right to self-determination to the international community. Therefore, Abdoh’s prejudice against Papuan self-determination manifested in his generalisation of the population’s elite class despite evidence that this group held multiple political positions, including demanding self-determination.

Next, Abdoh dismissed the political activities and activism of urban Papuan communities, arguing that they were numerically insignificant. He suggested that their activism had been engineered by groups outside the territory, as he believed it unfeasible for Papuans to demonstrate such political imagination. Writing to Thant, Abdoh emphasised how unrepresentative the urban activists were within the vast territory, especially protests in Hollandia, as seen in Fig. 19. Anti-Indonesia demonstrations in the capital city took place before and during the UNTEA mission, disrupting Abdoh’s characterisation of a population predominantly in favour of annexation. He argued that ‘The normal media through which public opinion expresses itself are non-existent. Communications are incredibly poor; large areas are still inaccessible and lie outside the administrative control. The combined effect of all this is to make it a well-nigh impossible task.’ Abdoh noted that the absence of a territory-wide communications network made the construction of a unified nationalist movement impossible and took the pockets of anti-Indonesian groups across the country as evidence of an isolated population of which it is impossible to gauge the opinion, rather than an indication of a widespread movement limited by poor infrastructure. Thus, Abdoh, chose to disregard the efforts of groups such as the Biak-Numfoor Regional Council and their interactions with their divisional commissioner. Abdoh continued to view the political agency of the Papuan population negatively against his discretionary standard of formal enfranchisement.

151 Ibid.
152 Ibid., pp. 39-40.
In his assessment of the rural Papuan population, Abdoh argued that they represented the majority of the population and could not forge a public opinion ‘even in a rudimentary form’. Criticising their agricultural lifestyle, he described them as ‘politically inarticulate’ and ‘nothing to do with social life or political changes taking place in this territory’. He maintained that the rural population’s political opinion was so ‘inarticulate’ that most of them would not be intellectually capable of understanding alternative scenarios for the future direction of the territory, nor able to find a basis upon which to choose between them. Thus, Abdoh abdicated the mission from the UN’s foundational commitment to self-determination expressed in the UN Charter and recent pledge to protect colonial populations in the December 1960 General Assembly resolution, characterising the majority of the Papuan population as not just apolitical, but intellectually incapable of concerning themselves with the political processes in their own territory.

The Agreement’s deferral of self-determination and UNTEA’s disregard for the reality on the ground conflicted with the Papuan activists’ understanding of the guiding principles of

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155 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
the UN. Whilst Abdoh curated his report during the first phase of the mission, Papuan activists promoted their situation in the hopes that the UN would support their claim to self-determination. Most Papuan anti-Indonesian groups were unified in their opinion that the plebiscite should take place under UNTEA administration no matter how long it took.\footnote{158 UNA, S-0876-0001-07-00001, ‘Abdoh report to Thant’, December 13th 1962, p. 37.} This demand was especially popular on the northern-most island of Biak-Numfoor where a movement for self-determination gained traction across the entire area.\footnote{159 CICR, B AG 200 158-002 200 (96), ‘Letter from New Guinea Council and Hollandia to President of ICRC in Geneva’, January 27th 1963.} The island’s Regional Council wrote to the UNTEA mission announcing their faith in the administration to organise a plebiscite whilst still in authority over the territory.\footnote{160 UNA, S-0876-0001-07-00001, ‘Abdoh report to Thant’, December 13th 1962, p. 34} When their initial appeal was unsuccessful, they escalated their anti-Indonesian statement to Thant via a cable. The Council reminded him of the applicability of the December 1960 General Assembly resolution, whereby self-determination was rendered an international norm, to their population. They argued that this resolution ‘decided that the rights of small nations are the same as those of big nations’ and therefore their right to an independent plebiscite was clear.\footnote{161 UNA, S-0884-0023-01-00001, ‘Cable from Party of Papuan Independence to U Thant’, August 1962, pp. 16-17.} They also made note of the articles in the resolution that were particularly relevant to their cause for self-determination, exhibiting their legal fluency.\footnote{162 Ibid.}

As Indonesian political and violent attempts to quash all Papuan activism increased,\footnote{163 Papuan Civil Servant Luther Saroy recalls that ‘In November 1962 the Indonesian army forced 11 Papuan leaders to sign a document stating that they relinquished the right to self-determination. And in December came the arrest and persecution of Papuans who had stirred up a demonstration, declaring their desire for the election to be held under the protection of the UNTEA, that is, the UN.’ See Visser (ed.), Governing New Guinea, p. 194.} Papuan pro-independence groups acknowledged that they needed to act quickly. Shrewdly, these groups attempted to negotiate their own independence through a policy of flattery towards the mission staff, accentuating the emotional importance of UNTEA’s administration to the population. To emphasise the power of the mission staff over the Papuans, they characterised this as being ‘under [UNTEA] protection’.\footnote{164 UNA, S-0884-0023-01-00001, ‘Cable from Party of Papuan Independence to U Thant’, August 1962, pp. 16-17.} They hoped to encourage the mission staff to amplify their requests to the international community and rectify the mischaracterisation of the population as apolitical or disengaged, something that had not taken place during the negotiations and New York Agreement drafting processes. The divisional commissioner of Merauke, a southeast coastal district, argued that Papuans from his region had great confidence in the ability of the UNTEA mission to challenge the betrayal of Papuan self-determination. He reported to Abdoh that:

If, while UNTEA is still in control, a decision is made not to hold a plebiscite at some time in the future the Papuans will feel cheated by UNTEA. It will be no good saying that this is the result of an Agreement between the Dutch and Indonesian governments because the Papuans do not trust either of them anymore but they do have a pathetic trust in UNTEA who they regard as their last hope… To many Papuans here the Agreement in practice means a guarantee by UN and UNTEA [to provide a plebiscite].

The UNTEA divisional commissioner’s description of the Papuans’ ‘pathetic trust’ in the administration displayed the mission culture of dismissing Papuan concerns. The administration was in no way planning on engaging with these protests or supporting the Papuans’ right to a plebiscite.

However, as phase one of UNTEA ended, Papuan hopes in the strength of the mission to challenge Indonesia were waning in the northern region. The divisional commissioner for Manokwari wrote to Abdoh that ‘there is a desire for a plebiscite but at the same time a growing fear that the United Nations may lack the means, and even the will to oppose Indonesia.’ These fears served only to exacerbate anxiety about the eventual Indonesian take over. Papuan government workers in the Central Highlands described their ‘gravest fears of their future under Indonesian control and that they would prefer to remain under the wing of UNTEA for as long as possible’. The strategies employed by the Papuan regional groups to provoke an empathetic and humanitarian reaction from UNTEA staff, based on their knowledge of the principles of the UN, exposed the political sophistication of the groups within West Papua and the callous attitude of the peacekeeping bureaucrats.

By the beginning of the second phase of the UNTEA mission, which began on 1st January 1963, the New Guinea Council described itself as ‘at its wits’ end’ in trying to persuade the UNTEA mission of the injustice of the New York Agreement and the impending authoritarianism of Indonesian annexation. They wrote to the ICRC that, ‘we know that [our complaints of a series of attacks on Papuan nationalists by Indonesian soldiers] are not listened to or are qualified as not true’. By 1963, most Papuan activists were aware that the UNTEA leadership had disqualified their situation from international oversight and reiterated the population’s lack of preparedness for self-determination, just as the Dutch imperialists had

166 Ibid., p. 36.
167 Ibid., p. 35.
169 Ibid.
argued before their exit. In addition to claims made by the Council on Biak-Numfoor to Thant in 1962, the three Papuan leaders of the New Guinea Council (Nicolaas Jouwe, Marcus Kaisiepo, and Filiman Jufuway) based in Hollandia appealed to the ICRC in Geneva in January 1963. They reported multiple incidents of Indonesian violence against nationalist Papuans during the UNTEA administration. Attaching a statement by UNTEA physician R. Kummer, the Council leaders requested an independent investigation into the terms of the New York Agreement on humanitarian and human rights grounds. The Biak Regional Councillors were politically informed and literate in the protections of international law. They used their elite position within Papuan society to internationalise the situation in their territory whilst the UNTEA administration was in sovereign authority, as they recognised this period was a brief opportunity for the territory to resist re-colonisation.

A week after receiving the petition, Roger Gallopin, the Executive Director of the ICRC, wrote to the Director General of the UN in Geneva Pier Spinelli, to alert him to the accusations made by the activists. Gallopin suggested that Abdoh, as the administrator appointed by Thant, ‘would be better than anyone able to rule on the merits of the complaints we received.’ He also argued that the administrator would be in the best position to take action to prevent violence, ‘if [the abuses] have actually taken place’, indicating that the ICRC leadership found it hard to believe accounts of violence under UN authority. Returning the power of oversight to the UN officials on the ground, the ICRC’s assumption of a UN senior official’s independence and their preference to not interfere with the UN’s area of jurisdiction served to prevent the Papuan activists from accessing international humanitarian recourse. Following communication between the UN Secretariat office in New York and the ICRC headquarters, the Councillors received a short letter from an ICRC delegate – rather than Gallopin – stating that they believed any previous instances of violence between Indonesian officials and Papuan civilians were ‘exceptional’ and efforts had been made by the UNTEA mission to avoid ‘a repetition’ of ‘any disagreement or tension’. Thus, humanitarian organisations contributed to the delegitimization of reported instances of serious violence by characterising them as exaggerations or misunderstandings.

170 Most Dutch imperialists argued that the population required years of tutelage before self-determination could be considered: D. Webster, ‘Race, Identity and Diplomacy in the Papuan Decolonisation Struggle, 1949-1962’, p. 3.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
International perceptions of the UN’s humanitarian principles and assumptions of the mission’s inherent benevolence also prevented Papuans from internationalising their claims of political asylum. Papuans who lost all hope in the UNTEA attempted to seek asylum across the border in Australian-mandated Papua New Guinea before the Indonesian takeover.\textsuperscript{176} Following the New York Agreement, eight thousand Papuans from the Sentani district near Hollandia requested political asylum in Papua New Guinea.\textsuperscript{177} Further waves of asylum claims followed throughout the UNTEA period.\textsuperscript{178} However, the Australian government argued that a basis for political asylum could not be made from civilians leaving a UN-administered territory. They stated that UNTEA should be responsible for these asylum requests rather than a national government, ‘bearing in mind the humanitarian principles to which the United Nations subscribe’.\textsuperscript{179} Without the support of the UNTEA or the recourse to apply for political asylum, the Papuan population were unable to internationalise their demand for a plebiscite under UNTEA jurisdiction. The UNTEA administration’s prioritisation of diplomatic stability between the UNTEA mission staff and the increasing numbers of Indonesian soldiers during the second phase of the mission,\textsuperscript{180} as planned in the Agreement, manifested in Papuan activists’ feelings of impotence, anxiety, and a loss of trust in the UN.\textsuperscript{181}

The lack of an international platform for Papuan activists, following their failed experiences with the ICRC and the Australian government, meant that their efforts to popularise anti-Indonesian feeling were limited to the information disseminated, formally and informally, by current and former UNTEA mission staff. On 2\textsuperscript{nd} April 1963, the British Foreign Office South-East Asia Department received a confidential report from Mr Broome, a Foreign Office delegate, reporting a conversation he had had with a Mr H. A. Luckham. Luckham had recently returned from being the UNTEA Administrator [Divisional Commissioner] at FakFak. With thirty years’ experience of administration in Malaya he is well qualified to judge local feeling… As a source of information his name should not be revealed since he is still technically employed by the UN.\textsuperscript{182}

\textsuperscript{176} For more on the Papua New Guinean experience of Australian colonial rule, see N. Ferns, \textit{Australia in the Age of International Development, 1945–1975: Colonial and Foreign Aid Policy in Papua New Guinea and Southeast Asia} (London: Springer, 2020).
\textsuperscript{177} ‘Natives Fear Indonesian Rule’, \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 18\textsuperscript{th} August 1962.
\textsuperscript{178} UNA, S-0703-0001-02, ‘Memorandum on some points of interest regarding West New Guinea – from Abdoh’s visit to the Netherlands’, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{182} BNA, FO 371/169951, DJ1013/15, ‘Confidential letter from Mr. Broome to the Foreign Office South East Asia Department’, April 8\textsuperscript{th} 1963.
Luckham had divulged to Broome that he was anxious to prevent a misunderstanding of popular Papuan political feeling in the territory. He argued that the influence of small pro-Indonesian faction had dominated all other examples of anti-Indonesian feeling and that reports of pro-Indonesian feeling among locals were utterly ‘unrepresentative’. Luckham’s conversations with the British Foreign Office suggest that there were internal tensions within the UNTEA bureaucracy regarding their treatment of Papuan activists and acceptance of Indonesian annexation, and that Abdoh’s delegitimization strategy had not been accepted by all UNTEA officials on the ground.

In violation of the chain of command within UNTEA and Abdoh’s direction, Luckham impressed upon Broome the internal pressure he felt to educate the international community on the reality of political engagement on the ground. He stated that, ‘educated Papuans as a whole are anti-Indonesian and apprehensive. They look forward with misgiving to the future after May 1, and cling – somewhat naively, I fear – to the hope of protection afforded by the prospect of the ultimate plebiscite’. Similar to the divisional commissioner who described the ‘pathetic trust’ of his region towards the UNTEA mission, Luckham shared the same pity when reporting on what the commissioner saw as the naïve wishes of those living in the territory. He argued that the naivety of the Papuan population was the cause of the population’s political misrepresentation. Their preconceptions of the rights-based principles of the UN made them vulnerable and ‘amenable to peaceful persuasion by the UNTEA officials, and this may give a false impression that they are less anti-Indonesian than they really are’.

Additionally, the UNTEA leadership distributed a memo within the mission bureaucracy in December 1962 that revealed that a number of the pro-Indonesian Papuan petitions contained coerced signatures from local civilians and should, therefore, be regarded with suspicion, corroborating Luckham’s report of ‘unrepresentative’ pro-Indonesian support. This early knowledge of pro-Indonesian activism being encouraged and even fabricated by Indonesian government employees in West Papua did not affect the divisional commissioners or Abdoh’s position. The memo and Luckham’s complaint suggest that the divisional commissioners, once on the ground, encountered widespread anti-Indonesian feeling within the Papuan population. They were also aware that the mission had no intention of supporting anti-Indonesian groups to gain an independent plebiscite. In response to UNTEA mischaracterisation of Papuan political

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183 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
186 BNA, FO 371/169951, DJ1013/15, ‘Confidential letter from Mr. Broome to the Foreign Office Southeast Asia Department’, April 8th 1963.
life, Luckham used his connections within the British Foreign Office to divulge the situation in West Papua that he felt the UNTEA mission had concealed from the international community.

The overwhelming dominant opinion at all levels of the UNTEA bureaucracy was that realistic or meaningful assessment of the political opinions of the Papuan population was impossible during their period of authority. David A. Sommerville, in his capacity as Director of Internal Affairs for UNTEA, argued that the complexity and diversity of feeling throughout the different regions meant that ‘the idea of a Papuan national feeling is novel and largely artificial’. Abdoh believed Pauans’ political activity was either not representative or not the job of the UN to disentangle (and often both). In order to placate the population and avert protests across the territory, the UNTEA Administration instructed the divisional commissioners to ‘let [the Pauans] down gently’. By infantilising the population, the peacekeeping staff persuaded themselves that their only duty towards the Pauans was quashing protests, rather than publicising violations of their rights. In practice, this involved bureaucratising the process of organising processions and meetings by extending the time required for permission to be considered. The divisional commissioners held the power over which groups could meet and which could result in a ‘breach of the peace’, further disempowering the population and threatening their civil rights.

Despite Pauan use of human rights rhetoric in their demands to the secretary-general, the ICRC, and their interactions with UNTEA staff on the ground in Regional Councils and demonstrations, their political agency was assumed to be unrepresentative and therefore could be ignored.

This section reveals the gatekeeping power that the UNTEA staff wielded over the territory during a brief moment of opportunity for the Pauan population. The success of Abdoh’s delegitimisation strategy calls into question the power dynamic between peacekeepers and citizens during decolonisation and highlights the pervasive cultures of exclusion interwoven with UN field-based practices. The UNTEA mission represented a final opportunity for the international recognition of Pauan rights. However, the mission’s focus on the completion of a smooth transfer drove the psychologically violent choice to actively misrepresent political feeling in West Papua. This misrepresentation served to legitimise Indonesia’s neo-colonial occupation and nullified any attempt to amplify Pauan activists’ demands to the wider international community. In effect, the mission’s administrative staff constructed an image of a population

that supposedly consented to, or were intellectually incapable of rejecting, Indonesian sovereignty. Therefore, the mid-level UN staff deployed to UNTEA erased the diverse swathes of Papuan activism from representation and further entrenched racialised mischaracterisation of the population to the international community.

**UNTEA’s performance of statehood**

To placate the population and assert control, Abdoh orchestrated UNTEA performances of statehood. This section explores the uneasy stability maintained by the UNTEA staff as they received reports of obstructive incidents from a range of anti-UNTEA actors. In this context of repeated attacks, the UNTEA leadership used symbols of statehood as a means of asserting and communicating authority, such as public ceremonies, postage stamps, and pamphlets, expressing the independence of the mission to the Dutch and Indonesians obstructionists. These visual strategies asserted the UN’s parity in authority with the Indonesians and Dutch in this conflict and revealed the UN bureaucracy’s aspirational performance of statehood.

The UNTEA leadership created tension on the ground by maintaining Dutch staff and introducing Indonesian personnel at the same time. Although most of the Dutch administration left following news of the New York Agreement,²⁹² of the 3,000 Dutch government staff in West Papua in 1962, 500 remained as part of UNTEA.²⁹³ However, those who remained in the territory did not always favour the UNTEA administration. *The Straits Times* recounted that the Dutch are ‘angry, disappointed and – a few of them – are suddenly aware that this strange land is home’.²⁹⁴ This emotional transfer resulted in UNTEA reports of Dutch efforts to obstruct the new administration by taking supplies with them and leaving behind a ‘burnt land’, in order to hinder the newly arrived UNTEA bureaucrats.²⁹⁵ In January 1963, reports emerged of scores of Dutch henchmen spread out in various localities of West Irian, bent on creating trouble and sabotage. The loss of maps and other important equipment at major installations served as an example of the fact that the Dutch planned to paralyse efforts for the realisation of development projects in that territory.²⁹⁶

This Dutch ‘mischief-making’, echoing the obstruction tactics of evacuating Belgian colonists in Congo, also involved rumours of inbound Indonesian military aggression.²⁹⁷ One of the more dangerous plots revolved around an uninsured Indonesian ship heading from Singapore to West

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²⁹³ ‘As the Dutch say a hard farewell’, *The Straits Times*, 15th October 1962.
²⁹⁴ Ibid.
²⁹⁵ UNA, S-0876-0001-04-00001, ‘Press Conferences given by Brigadier General Rikhye at Djakarta on 27 August, at 5pm’, p. 11.
²⁹⁶ BNA, FO 371/169951, DJ1013, ‘Selby (Djakarta embassy) to Warner (FCO)’, January 25th 1963.
²⁹⁷ Ibid.
Papua in order to provoke a military response from the UNTEA administration.198 These false reports also encouraged anxieties within vulnerable sections of the Papuan population, such as school-children. A British High Commission reported to the Commonwealth Office in London that, ‘the origin of [Papuan] refugees’ decision to go to Australian New Guinea came from their Dutch Head Teacher who warned them of an awful fate when the Indonesians took over’.199

In contrast to the overt obstructionism employed by the remaining Dutch officials, Indonesian obstructionism was more covert. By the second phase of UNTEA, there had been a significant influx of Indonesian soldiers into West Papua, many of whom were described by the Biak divisional commissioner as, ‘younger people whose educational training appears to have been more political than practical’.200 These Indonesian personnel harnessed their authority as the incoming sovereign authority power over the local populations and used Papuans as proxies to challenge the length of UNTEA’s administration. They cultivated and funded pro-Indonesian groups of Papuans, many of whom were coerced or misinformed,201 to send petitions demanding the mission be cut short.202 The Biak divisional commissioner reported that his local representatives told him that, on at least one occasion, a Papuan pro-Indonesian petition had ‘fallen into Indonesian hands’ during its production.203 Most of these pro-Indonesian obstruction and propaganda attempts, such as anti-UNTEA pamphlets and communications, were obvious to the majority of Papuans, who, ‘even in the far-off villages, they [have] begun to realise what is happening. Indonesian propaganda by radio mostly has a reverse result: people discovered that this propaganda consists of lies because they can locally verify what is being said’.204 Therefore, the most significant effect of Indonesian staff’s obstruction efforts was anxiety and instability for UNTEA rather than to encourage Papuans to accept the Indonesian takeover.

Additionally, pro-Indonesian groups orchestrated demonstrations in the hopes that the UNTEA administration would have to call for the military reinforcement of UNSF.205 On 17th January 1963, the UN Department of Information broadcast reports of a ‘spontaneous mass

203 Ibid.
204 Ibid.
demonstration which had apparently been staged by some 2,000 West Irianese [Papuans] before the UNTEA office at Kotabaru.\(^{206}\) Indonesian troops employed *within* the UNSF also created disruption through a similar strategy. Abdoh wrote in his December progress report to Thant that he believed,

> There is also the risk that the Indonesians who are already in this Territory, might encourage, or engineer, incidents involving Indonesian troops in order to achieve their objectives. Incidents of this nature, which have already occurred sporadically, leave UNTEA with no other alternative than to use the UNSF to confine the Indonesian troops to their barracks, and should they resist, serious clashes will ensue.\(^{207}\)

The Indonesian personnel within UNTEA recognised that damaging the UN’s reputation was key to terminating the mission. From an anti-colonial perspective, thesetests also attracted international interest. Some supported pro-Indonesian calls for the UNTEA period of authority to be shortened as it was an obstacle to Papuan self-determination and unity with Indonesia.\(^{208}\) Thant, however, was unconvinced of the motivations behind the protests, believing that the influence the Indonesians wielded over young and elite sections of the population erased the political agency of the rest of the population. The secretary-general ‘had no doubt at all that demonstrations or representations by Papuans were Indonesian-inspired and were not spontaneous’.\(^{209}\) UNTEA leadership prioritised the delegitimization of Papuan demands for an UNTEA-led plebiscite over concerns about the incoming Indonesian authority and the absence of a meaningful survey of Papuan feeling by 1st May 1963.

Although the relationships between the UNTEA staff and the leadership of the Indonesian Liaison Mission seemed friendly on the surface,\(^{210}\) cracks had started to appear in the regional districts by November 1962 as UNTEA staff became suspicious of their Indonesian colleagues.\(^{211}\) Biak’s divisional commissioner reported that, ‘Although outwardly polite and co-operative, the Indonesian Mission here is doing all possible to wrest the initiative from me’.\(^{212}\) UNTEA staff pushed back against efforts to position the mission as a cover for an Indonesian takeover, insisting that the mission was independent. However, some staff were concerned about


\(^{212}\) UNA, S-0701-0003-04’, ‘Report from Divisional Commissioner, Biak, to Director of Internal Affairs, Hollandia, 4 January 1963’. 151
how the Indonesian Liaison Mission personnel interacted with Papuan civilians and what this indicated about the future. The Biak divisional commissioner wrote to Abdoh:

> [Papuans on the Regional Council] think it likely that many of them will be ousted or imprisoned once the Indonesians have taken over. After the behaviour of the Indonesians towards Papuan leaders… and the activity and attitude of the Indonesian Mission as observed by me in Biak (e.g. their going round and significantly taking the names of the few who flew the Papuan flag on December 1st) I personally would place little reliance on Indonesian assurances to the contrary. And in so far as we offer Papuans assurances obviously based on Indonesian promises we must not expect to convince anybody in this country henceforth.\(^\text{213}\)

Additionally, one of Abdoh’s last progress reports to Thant mentions that the Indonesian Army Intelligence had scanned the island’s communications for anti-Indonesian groups and petitions in order to threaten Papuan civilians in retaliation for their politics.\(^\text{214}\) He also reported that he was aware of the Indonesian government’s intention of setting up a military government in the territory and questioned, ‘whether or not [a military government] is another way of bestowing further honours on the “liberators” of West Irian, to keep them somehow occupied…’\(^\text{215}\) His flippant tone indicated that, although he did not support of the Indonesian government’s plans for the island and how they would threaten Papuans’ future human and civil rights, he had no intention of ‘rocking the boat’.

Abdoh’s response to ongoing anti-UNTEA obstruction was to project UN and mission symbols across West Papua to visibly demonstrate their authority to the people and the international community. The performances of ‘UN statehood’ during UNTEA allowed Abdoh to experiment with methods of statehood, communicating to the international community that a liberal internationalist organisation had, through mission staff, managed to bring ‘welfare and progress to the people of this territory’.\(^\text{216}\)

In the domestic sphere, UNTEA’s symbols across the territory allowed the UN to demonstrate authority to Papuan communities outside Hollandia. For example, UNTEA’s name was spread around the territory via new postage stamps. UN stamps in West Papua physically asserted the authority of the mission across the region, from business to business, house to house, civilian to civilian. Alvita Akiboh’s work on colonial currencies has revealed how states distributed stamps as symbolic performances of statehood to encourage the populations to

\(^\text{213}\) UNA, S-0075-0002-04, ‘Memorandum from Divisional Commissioner, Biak, to Dr. Abdoh, 4 December 1962’.
\(^\text{215}\) Ibid., pp. 9-10.
perceive them as politically legitimate. Similarly, Roland Burke’s scholarship on UN commemorative stamps has argued for the power of stamps in organisational self-fashioning of national image and memory. For the first UNTEA stamp, the administration overprinted the word ‘UNTEA’ on Dutch ‘Nieuw Guinea’ stamps (as can be seen in Figure 20) suggesting a functional – rather than commemorative – choice. Overprinting was an efficient method of ‘replacing’ the Dutch administration without great expense or effort. Despite the limited creativity of this decision, it was a significant choice to deface the Dutch stamps with a bold assertion of ‘UNTEA’, especially for a seven-month mission. Thus, the first UNTEA stamp conveyed a usurpation of the Dutch colonial administration, acting as a ‘carrier’ for the message of the UNTEA territorial inheritance for the population.

![UNTEA stamps, 1963](image)

Fig. 20. UNTEA stamps, 1963 © CIRQ Collection

Most of these stamps were overprinted in Hollandia for domestic use but a ‘mint’ batch was overprinted in the Netherlands and sold directly to the UN headquarters in New York, where it was sold on to visitors as a novelty item. Selling these stamps in the UN headquarters indicated that the organisation leadership saw benefits to projecting the mission as a way of performing statehood practices, as well as stabilising the region; it was part of a broader process of expanding the functions of the organisation during decolonisation. The UNTEA stamps were displayed and sold alongside other numerous commemorative stamps, many of which represented milestones in the organisation’s international human rights project. Thus, these stamps provided ‘static’ memorialisation of institutional ‘successes’. Sales of the ‘mint’ UNTEA stamps ceased on 31st May once Indonesian stamps for the territory (as seen in Figure

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21) became valid. The overprinted Dutch stamps communicated the institution’s sovereign authority to both domestic and international audiences, allowing the mission to make an impact across the vast territory and connect with civilians beyond the reach of typical UNTEA activities. A year after the end of the mission, the UN Secretariat created a commemorative postage stamp to be sold from the UN headquarters (as seen in Figure 22) indicating the institution’s decision to entrench the mission in the official history of the organisation’s successes. In the stamp, UNTEA is symbolised as a bridge between the two dates – the origin and conclusion of the mission – emphasising its transitional role. West Papua is understood as a territorial mass to be governed rather than as a population to be protected.

Fig. 21. Indonesian stamp that replaced the UNTEA stamps on May 31st 1963 with West Papua artificially positioned as part of the archipelago © Wikicommons

Fig. 22. UN-printed 1st Anniversary UNTEA stamp, 1963 © Stampworld

Abdoh made a concerted effort to increase the media coverage given to UNTEA and ‘make available to the people of the territory and the peoples of the world at large, factual information about what UNTEA has achieved’, in order to publicise the mission and its

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operations within the international media. He argued that the administrative nature of the mission no longer interested the global community once the UN staff had arrived. In the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the ongoing armed conflict between India and China, Abdoh felt UNTEA was the UN’s underdog operation and argued that the ‘UNTEA task, being at present in its most part one of an economic and social character has – as usual in the case of UN work in similar fields - attracted less attention than it deserves.’ To challenge this lack of media interest and ‘work against [the] odds’, Abdoh established a public information campaign that increased the number of press releases issued by the mission from a maximum of ten a month under the Dutch administration to sixty during October under UNTEA. The Popular Information Service, also referred to as the UNTEA Department for Information, organised a ‘special information programme’ to expand interest in the UN administration. Thus, this publicity strategy demonstrated an evolution from the UNEF mission, which focused energy on building a mission identity internally, to the UNTEA mission which was about projecting an identity outwards, beyond the boundaries of the mission, capital city, and even the host territory.

Abdoh encouraged the publicization of the UN mission and its benevolent practices in West Papua but continued to silence the voices of Papuan activists and political activities within these publications. The Service disseminated positive reports of UNTEA’s activities through multiple cultural routes, such as ‘films, film strips, newspapers, books and pamphlets’. They spread these throughout West Papua and arranged for them to be ‘read in Schools and the posters were put up in public places’. The UNTEA officers involved Papuans in the distribution of this information to more rural regions: ‘throughout the territory there are about thirty bodies which could be described as study groups to help disseminate information, hold seminars and also to sell the books sent from the central office on a commission basis’. Abdoh had the advantage of regional information distribution through his new public information campaign in his propaganda battle with obstructive activities.

Abdoh took advantage of any event that could be construed as a celebration of the UN and the mission. Using the UNTEA budget, the Popular Information Service disseminated ‘a UN Day leaflet, the secretary-general’s message with his photograph, a special talk prepared by the Press Bureau, the Temporary Administrator’s speech, all in [Malay]’. Additionally, UN

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222 UNA, S-0703-0001-05, ‘Meeting of Directors: Saturday, 1 December 1962, at 8am’, p. 2.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid., p. 3.
226 UNA, S-0876-0001-03-00001, ‘Rolz-Bennett report to Secretary General’, November 15th 1962, p. 34.
227 Ibid., p. 35.
228 Ibid., p. 34.
229 Ibid., p. 35.
Human Rights Day was observed in the territory and the Popular Information Service recorded celebrations in the regions and Hollandia. A recent special issue, edited by Paul van Trigt, has drawn attention to UN observances (such as days, weeks, years, decades) as integral to the UN’s ‘institutional identity’ and ‘how the organization tries to connect the role of the various stakeholders with public opinion’. The dissemination of this educational material performed an interactive function between the Papuan population and the UNTEA administration in a similar way to the postage stamps. These cultural media served a crucial purpose for publicising the identity of the institution internationally, as they related the activities of the mission to the core purpose of the organisation.

The mission regularly also held flag ceremonies in which UN troops hoisted the UN flag in alignment with, firstly, the Dutch flag and, later, the Indonesian flag on 31st December 1962. The administration saw this as a method of ensuring recognition of the role played by the UN as a sovereign party within the history of the dispute. Additionally, Abdoh sought to ‘psychologically prepare’ the population for the changes of authority within the seven months of the mission through these regular flag ceremonies. These ceremonies were often followed by ‘a guard of honour, composed of detachments of the Pakistani contingent of the United Nations Security Force and a unit of the Indonesian army, [that] presented arms’. The guards of honour projected statehood and militaristic nationalism within the UN mission. They blurred the lines between the separate military and administrative mandates and suggested an ingrained militaristic impulse within UN peacebuilding. The scheduled presentations of military power indicated that those within the UNTEA administration were highly influenced by colonial military traditions, such as the guard of honour, as powerful displays of sovereign authority. The 1,500 ‘politically acceptable’ Pakistani peacekeeping troops would have been influenced by the rituals and practices enforced by their colonial British experiences until independence in 1947.

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Thus, Abdoh orchestrated the colonial spectacles of military guards and flag ceremonies to project the image of a peacekeeping administration in control.

Abdoh and the UNTEA staff challenged Dutch and Indonesian efforts at deception and obstructionism by asserting UN authority through demonstrations of colonial-inspired militarism and symbols of statehood. This pressure to challenge the hostility of their supposed allies on the ground was felt by Abdoh immediately following his acceptance of the role.\textsuperscript{237} Thant’s refusal to shorten the mission despite Indonesian propaganda and abuses for fear of returning to the General Assembly with a collapsed Agreement compelled Abdoh assert UNTEA’s sovereignty. Therefore, the UNTEA staff relied upon performances inspired by militarised colonialism in the attempts to persuade the Papuans and international community of their ability to successfully govern a territory.

\textsuperscript{237} UNA, S-0876-0001-07-00001, ‘Abdoh report to Thant’, December 13\textsuperscript{th} 1962, p. 40.
Conclusion

By 1st May 1963, Abdoh and his staff were aware that the Indonesian takeover was grounded in misinformation and that the New York Agreement was contrary to the demands of much of the Papuan population. The divisional commissioner for Biak wrote to Abdoh to highlight the opportunity of the mission authority to reassess the situation in the territory, and thus the terms of the Agreement, to reflect the overwhelming evidence on the ground. He argued,

> The simple issue is whether largely fabricated evidence is to be discounted and a bona fide attempt made in time by the UN to ascertain Papuan feeling, with the assurance convincingly given in advance that if the vote goes in favour of Papuan separation from Indonesia it can and will be effectively supported.\(^{238}\)

However, internal perceptions of the population and Abdoh’s political motives to support the Indonesian takeover manifested in peacekeepers dismissing or mischaracterising the political reality. The UNTEA staff deemed the voices of pro-independence Papuan activists as, paradoxically, both unrepresentative and illegitimate. The opportunity for UNTEA staff to publicise the reality of the political conditions in the territory was lost. The reputational boon of successfully administrating a post-colonial territorial transfer remained unsullied for UN leadership in New York and Thant characterised the transfer as a victory for peace.\(^{239}\) However, the fraudulent plebiscite of 1969 helped to highlight the failures of the UN to react to the authoritarian threat of Indonesian annexation.\(^{240}\)

> The future of Papuan self-determination remained bleak under Indonesian authority. The Indonesian government communicated to Thant that the UN’s involvement in the future plebiscite would be, at best, limited. The British Foreign Office saw this as a humiliation for the UN and commented that, ‘The best that the United Nations has been able to arrange is for periodic visits by experts. We appreciate the difficulties under which the secretary-general is operating and would not care to embarrass him by asking him to do more’.\(^{241}\) The UN leadership chose to prioritise the reputation of the organisation over the rights of the Papuan population, despite the moment of opportunity presented by UNTEA. The reputational damage of the Congo mission catalysed a shift in the decision-making of UN staff. UN personnel saw their

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\(^{238}\) UNA, S-0075-0002-04, ‘Memorandum from Divisional Commissioner, Biak, to Dr. Abdoh, 4 December 1962’, pp. 1-2.


institution in crisis and deployed the field operation to recover credibility, blinding the mission staff to rights abuses and credible nationalist claims-making.

The UN leadership, at the height of ONUC controversy, sought to demonstrate the skill of the UN in peacefully stabilising a region. This context of organisational turmoil and Abdoh’s feelings of solidarity with fellow Bandung representatives from Indonesia, drove UNTEA staff to focus on completing the mission rather than examining the territorial context. The UNTEA administration staff focused on the short-term nature of the mission and the institutional demand for a ‘job well done’. The bureaucrats forged an organisational culture that made them feel superior to the local population, limiting any sympathy or solidarity with the Papuan activists and their on-going colonial experience.

As the mission concluded, UNTEA staff were relieved to leave the isolated territory. In his last administrative report to the UN headquarters, George Janecek, UNTEA Chief Administrative Officer and Czech national, wrote to his UN colleagues in the New York offices, stating,

I am sure that over these past seven or so months many of you have approached your “UNTEA” desks in fear and trepidation and some of your exclamations have even reverberated throughout Hollandia/Kotabaru. You have, perhaps, heard our slogan which we ourselves use to each other in time of stress and pain in Hollandia/Kotabaru, West Papua/West Irian/Irian Barat – “You never had it so good”. Well, today, it almost is true.242

This report provides a glimpse into the insular peacekeeping circles in the field as they detached their duty to the mission from the principles of the organisation. The staff forged an identity built upon their shared conception of the post as unexciting and remote, positioning themselves on an intellectual binary with the Pauans. This perceived intellectual supremacy facilitated the attitude that the Pauans did not yet ‘deserve’ self-determination and, therefore, were not worth the potential reputational damage or a resurgence of violence in the Pacific.

The UNTEA mission demonstrated the UN leadership’s ability to construct a field operation as a means of reputational repair, rather than as an opportunity to support vulnerable populations with no other source of international recourse. However, despite significant efforts at ‘repairing’ the image of the UN, UN staff learnt very little from the Congo Crisis as racialised conceptions of the host population continued to pervade and underpin peacekeeping practices and decision-making in the field. The UNTEA mission staff perpetuated patterns of international recruitment and dismissal of local elites and activists, grounded in colonial and diplomatic prejudices against Pacific islanders, delegitimising activists’ efforts to attract the

attention of the mission leadership and the ICRC. The ‘legacies of Bandung’ encouraged Abdoh to perceive the re-colonisation of the Papuan population by the Indonesian government as part of Indonesia’s process of decolonisation and felt that intervening in the internal affairs of the state would violate post-colonial sovereign norms. Despite the diversity and complexity of Papuan political affinities in 1962-1963, the mid-rank UNTEA staff legitimised a colonial takeover and paved the way for the fraudulent plebiscite in 1969.

Fig. 24. Map of UNFICYP Deployment, September 1964 © British National Archives

In the same year that UNTEA ceased operations, another post-colonial dispute erupted onto the international stage, this time in Cyprus. This chapter argues that the military assistance provided by the Force and the political consequences of UN mediation facilitated the stagnation of the conflict and the further entrenchment of hostility between the warring parties. The literature on peacekeeping in Cyprus neglects the dual mediation and military mandate of the UN Force, obscuring this innovation from UN histories. The first UNFICYP mediator prioritised consultation with Greek, Turkish, and British state representatives over negotiation with Cypriot leaders, perpetuating paternalistic notions that post-colonial peace could only be achieved through external actors’ participation and intervention. This disconnected the mediation processes from the regional dynamics on the island and prevented the communities from

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negotiating their own post-colonial Cypriot society. By the late 1960s, the complex socio-political dynamics of the Cyprus conflict had shaken the UN leadership’s belief in their interventions as instrumental or, even, beneficial to the resolution of a crisis. The Secretariat inner circle and UNFICYP contributing nations began to question whether the presence and operations of the mission had damaged the chances of armed parties reaching a peaceful settlement in Cyprus. Thus, the experiences of UNFICYP challenged how the UN leadership traditionally conceived of ‘peace’, as the absence of violence and provoked the staff to consider the role that peacekeeping missions should – or could – play in the future of international conflict response.

On 30th November 1963, the precarious post-independence peace between the island’s Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities fractured. Greek-Cypriot complaints about the protections afforded to Turkish-Cypriots within the constitution, such as quotas for government roles and veto powers within the Cypriot House of Representatives, ignited inter-communal violence. Post-colonial deliberations had provoked feelings of political entitlement in both ethno-national identities, resulting in a violent struggle for sovereign authority. Cypriot anti-colonial insurgency against the British administration during the 1950s had created a highly militarised population: both communities were trained, armed, and prepared to defend their rights. The legacies of British colonial rule were evident in Greek-Cypriot strategies used against Turkish-Cypriot citizens. In December 1963, Greek-Cypriot police rounded up hundreds of Turkish-Cypriot civilians and held them hostage in the detention camps used five years earlier by the British to hold Greek-Cypriot resistance fighters. Turkish-Cypriot paramilitary groups were comparatively ill-resourced and were unable to defend their community and places of worship from desecration. Red Cross relief trucks began to distribute emergency food supplies and kerosene in January 1964 as Turkish-Cypriot refugees travelled to Nicosia, the capital city, to escape violence in the villages. Faced with these worsening conditions, on 4th March 1964, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 186, following the development of a general consensus within the Security Council, to formally recommend the construction of the United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The UN leadership constructed the Force in the hope that it would de-escalate the inter-communal violence on the island between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots before the guarantor states (Britain, Turkey, and Greece) were militarily engaged.

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6 UN Doc, S/PV.1099, ‘Security Council official records, 19th year, 1099th meeting, 28 February 1964, New York’
Although UN member-states had discussed concerns about the inter-communal violence and colonial instability of Cyprus on and off throughout the 1950s, it was not until the bloodshed in winter 1963-1964 that the island became the focus of global attention. Post-independence, each community had characterised the other as obstructive to their administrative or municipal goals. However, these disputes had not ignited concerns for international peace and security until President of Cyprus and Greek-Cypriot leader, Makarios III, announced his ‘13 Points’ for the functional and political improvement of the constitution on 30th November 1963, which rejected the legal protections afforded to the Turkish-Cypriots. The island swiftly became a site of Cold War anxieties as Cyprus provided NATO countries a direct non-Arctic route to the USSR. Geographically, the island represented a meeting point between Europe and the Middle East and was proximate to the Black Sea as well as NATO-aligned nations, especially those within the newly constructed ‘Southern Flank’. Post-Suez, the British were increasingly protective of the island and the UN leadership grew concerned about the lengths that NATO-aligned nations would go to in an attempt to protect their strategic access to the island. In a Security Council meeting, Thant emphasised the danger of the conflict to international peace and security. The UN mediator Galo Plaza characterised UNFICYP as crucial to not only the restoration of peace in the ‘eastern Mediterranean area [but] possibly the world as a whole’. As Greek-Cypriot General Georgios Grivas stated, ‘Of course we all realise Cyprus can never become a world power. All the same we can certainly do our best to go on being a world problem’, suggesting that the Greek-Cypriot leadership recognised their political power within the dynamic of the conflict.

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10 J. Ker-Lindsay, Britain and the Cyprus Crisis, 1963-1964 (Berkeley: Bibliopolis, 2009), p. 9.
Hostilities between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots on the island emerged during Ottoman rule. Religious divisions between Greek (or Christian) and Turkish (or Muslim) Cypriots were fundamental to the evolution of ethno-nationalist feeling on the island. Under Ottoman authority, the Turkish-Cypriot minority were the dominant political group, with Muslim religious leaders and institutions at the centre of Cypriot governance. However, these divisions remained fluid as co-habitation and inter-mingling remained common across the island. In 1878, the Ottoman leadership granted Britain suzerainty of the island, causing a seismic shift in ethno-religious power relations between the communities. Once the dominant group in religious and political authority, the Turkish-Cypriots were now seen as the minority community by the British colonists and thus less of a threat. Seeking to placate the majority Greek-Cypriots, the British neglected Turkish-Cypriots’ civil rights and political demands. The British colonial administration entrenched the existing inter-communal divisions into Cypriot governance, categorising and over-emphasising the geographic distribution of the groups as immutable. The British administration, once it had formalised Cyprus as a Crown colony, cemented the ethno-nationalist identities within Cypriot society and defined the groups as binaries, each characterised by its opposition of the other, thus accelerating inter-communal hostility, resentment, and nationalism on the island.

Following a decade of counterinsurgency, Cyprus achieved independence from Britain on 6th August 1960. However, the inter-communal divisions were not resolved by decolonisation. The newly drafted constitution of the Republic of Cyprus became the crux of the post-colonial conflict between the two communities. The British government orchestrated the constitutional drafting process and used the transnational negotiations in 1959 to ensure they retained territorial authority for their military bases on the island. The London-Zurich Agreements (or the Treaties) were attended by representatives of Britain, Greece, Turkey and both Cypriot communities. These negotiations established a precarious peace. However, with the colonial administration no longer in power, the communities characterised each other as the political obstacle to their ultimate goals: enosis (union with Greece) for Greek Cypriots or taksim (partition of the island into Greek and Turkish sides) for Turkish Cypriots. The drafting parties failed to

17 Ibid., p. 75.
18 Given, ‘Maps, Fields, and Boundary Cairns: Demarcation and Resistance in Colonial Cyprus’, p. 4.
consider the practicalities of governing a sectarian society and prioritised the maintenance of guarantor interests and economic ties.\textsuperscript{21} Once on the ground, the UNFICYP leadership insisted that the conflict was not confined to the island and that it could swiftly expand into a Cold War battleground.

This chapter is structured chronologically to illustrate the shifting preoccupations of the UNFICYP leadership during different phases of the conflict. The first section explores the outbreak of violence in December 1963 and examines the construction of the UNFICYP mission in this context as Thant struggled to attract contingent and financial donations in the aftermath of ONUC criticism. The mission’s first year was dedicated to resolving immediate crises across the island, such as the widespread displacement problem, rather than implementing long-term solutions. The second section explores how UNFICYP's focus shifted from military and humanitarian operations across the island to high-level diplomatic actions undertaken by the UN mediator from March 1965 to January 1967. Analysing the personnel involved in the mediation effort, particularly the second UN mediator Galo Plaza, and their engagement with state actors, emphasises the organisation’s vulnerability to member-state criticism, limiting its ability to complete its mandate. The third section traces the eruption of violence in January 1967 and the influence of the political coup on the Greek mainland. This re-focus on military activities cemented the mission’s role as a crutch for the belligerents and the perpetuation of war, rather than as an instrument for resolving the conflict.

**Historiographies of Cyprus, Anglo-American foreign policy, and post-colonial statehood**

Many historians have highlighted the legacies of Ottoman policies, which ethnically divided Cypriot society under British colonial rule, noting that the Ottoman Empire introduced these religious identities and national dimensions to Cyprus.\textsuperscript{22} For example, Eleni Bouleti has noted the cultural shift undergone by the Turkish-Cypriot community as it navigated the transition from dominant minority group under Ottoman rule, to minority group under British rule.\textsuperscript{23} Others have emphasised the British colonial administration’s role in formalising the divisive customs of Ottoman authority into Cypriot law; the British authorities translated the communities’ past religious affiliations into administrative categories within Cypriot colonial governance structures. British policies constructed an environment that expanded or accelerated pre-existing ethnic

\textsuperscript{22} Scholars have noted that the Ottoman Empire was foundationally important for introducing these religious identities and national divisions to Cyprus. See Given, ‘Maps, Fields, and Boundary Cairns’, pp. 3-4; Bouleti, ‘Early Years of British Administration in Cyprus’.
\textsuperscript{23} Bouleti, ‘Early Years of British Administration in Cyprus’, p. 75.
divisions and religious identities. Religious affiliation became instrumental for the colonial administration’s construction of national identities for each community, evolving to bind personal categories to opposing sovereign imaginations.

This argument has been explored in Arie Dubnov and Laura Robson’s edited volume, which offers a transnational history of partitionism. These scholars situate the experience and interests of the British colonial administration at the centre of post-colonial partitionism in Ireland, Pakistan, and Israel. They argue that, ‘Partition, then, belonged firmly within the imperial realm; it was less a vehicle for national liberation than a novel, sophisticated divide et imperā tactic that sought to co-opt the new global tilt toward the ethnic nation-state’. British demarcations, administrative categories, and territorial separation of communities were all part of a broader strategy of dividing ethnic groups within the same state. The power dynamics and historical grievances bound up in Cypriot ethno-religious identities were exaggerated during the postwar period as the ‘majority/minority’ articulation of ethnic separatism became linked to claims for self-determination (or, as demanded by the Greek-Cypriot community, enosis). Therefore, the British colonial administration not only entrenched national divisions into Cypriot governance structures but also legitimised the mainland countries’ ethnic claims to protect ‘their’ communities on the island. This literature gives context to the inter-communal conflict at the centre of this chapter, demonstrating that the roots of the constitutional conflict were in the British government’s imperialistic strategy to control colonised Cypriots. These works also contextualise the Greek-Cypriots’ violent response to the inclusion of British troops in UNFICYP. Engaging with this literature highlights the irony of British peacekeepers’ involvement in the resolution a conflict of their government’s own creation.

The conflict in Cyprus has been predominantly examined through the lens of Western foreign policy, with diplomatic histories of British and American foreign policies dominating.

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27. Alecou, Communism and Nationalism in Postwar Cyprus.
30. See A. Abou-El-Fadl, Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War, (Cambridge: CUP, 2018).
These histories have highlighted high-diplomacy decision-making and Anglo-American strategies to control the conflict. More recently, those researching NATO and development of the Southern Flank have encouraged an examination of international organisation as an integral forum for Western diplomatic interference in Greek and Turkish foreign policy.\(^3\) Both nations carried significant military and diplomatic weight during the Cold War and the Cypriot conflict guided their relations with one another. These works have also drawn attention to the covert operations waged by Henry Kissinger within formal (e.g. NATO) and informal networks.\(^2\) These diplomatic histories have been vital for underlining the networks used when undertaking negotiations and interventions in the Cyprus conflict.

Scholarly engagement with the UN intervention in Cyprus has been limited to British interests and activities.\(^3\) Neil Briscoe, James Ker-Lindsay, and Alan James have provided insight into the diplomatic anxieties and military operations of the British army independently and as part of the UNFICYP mission. These works have been vital for establishing that the transition from the British peacekeeping mission (the Truce Force) to the UNFICYP mission was not as clean as Thant projected it to be, due to their focus on the first year of operations and the British presence on the island. However, detailed analysis of the UN intervention in Cyprus, beyond British foreign policy and American diplomatic interference, is limited and fails to link patterns in peacekeeping practices from previous missions to the Cypriot context.

Historiographical attention to Cyprus has flourished in recent years as part of a growing interest in rethinking British imperial history and colonial counterinsurgency.\(^4\) These histories have revealed the complicated relationships between Cypriot political groups and colonial actors, nuancing understandings of oppressor and oppressed.\(^5\) Dominant works on British operations in Cyprus have focused on the policies and interests of British foreign policy.\(^6\) This chapter

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\(^{33}\) Briscoe, Britain and UN Peacekeeping 1948–67; J. Ker-Lindsay, Britain and the Cyprus Crisis, 1963-1964 (Berkeley: Bibliopolis, 2009); A. James, Keeping the Peace in the Cyprus Crisis of 1963–64 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).


builds upon these recent contributions to the period of post-independence Cyprus, examining British political and diplomatic interests in maintaining their position in Cyprus in the context of a declining empire and a developing Cold War. These works have helped to establish what the British government sought in its foreign policy post-Suez and contextualised its participation within the peacekeeping mission: within eight years they had shifted from the target of a peacekeeping mandate to being the key contributor to the UN Force in Cyprus. Evanthis Hatzivassiliou and Diana Markides have argued that Britain’s foreign policy towards Cyprus was driven by emotions around losing influence in Egypt. Hatzivassiliou notes that,

Britain felt that it needed to retain its predominance in the Middle East in order to keep its place among the world’s great powers; the fear of being reduced to the status of a “second class power” dominated the British “official mind” all the way to the 1956 Suez debacle.

In the context of Britain’s humiliation following the Suez Crisis, Whitehall’s anti-Communist foreign policy focused on retaining assets in the Middle East and the surrounding region.

Scholarship examining mediation during the Cyprus conflict has highlighted the influence of international geopolitical pressures on the success of wartime negotiations. This chapter investigates the UNFICYP's mediation efforts and examines how some belligerent parties, in particular President Makarios benefitted from the protracted negotiations and saw the talks as abstract activities, rather than instrumental for the resolution of the conflict. This chapter’s interpretation of the UNFICYP's experience with mediation in Cyprus aligns with recent scholarship by Eric Min. He has argued that, although there has been a greater impulse towards international mediation during warfare in the postwar era than before 1945, these negotiations have tended to be less productive in terms of forging peace.


38 Hatzivassiliou, ‘Cold War Pressures’; Markides, The Cyprus Tribute.

39 Hatzivassiliou, ‘Cold War Pressures’, p. 1149


presence and involvement of ‘nuclear belligerents’ and ‘institutional alliances’, such as NATO and the Organisation of African Unity, interfered in negotiations processes and prevented the resolution of conflict.\textsuperscript{42} He has posited that, post-war, belligerents entered into international mediation processes in order to assuage external pressures, such as UN resolutions, rather than out of a meaningful interest in achieving a political resolution.\textsuperscript{43} This chapter will likewise argue that belligerents in the Cyprus conflict entered into negotiations with the UN mediator to maintain the appearance of attempting to resolve the conflict only. Similarly, Suzanne Werner and Amy Yuen argue that third-party settlements are more likely to collapse due to belligerents’ lack of interest in resolving the conflict.\textsuperscript{44} By examining the failed efforts of Galo Plaza to resolve the Cypriot conflict, this chapter provides a detailed analysis of warfare extended by stubborn or uninterested parties.

The Cyprus case also speaks to growing historiographical interest in the moment of decolonisation as an opportunity to reimagine national and communal identities.\textsuperscript{45} Scholarship by Eva-Maria Muschik and Guy Sinclair has demonstrated the repercussions of decolonisation on UN staff as they struggled to orientate themselves among wildly different conceptions of sovereignty in the post-colonial environment.\textsuperscript{46} Works analysing activists’ aspirations for post-colonial territorial identities have emerged alongside a surge of interest in decolonisation and anti-colonial activism.\textsuperscript{47} More scholars are highlighting the dynamic nature of post-colonial sovereignty as alternative world visions gained traction with anti-colonial activists.\textsuperscript{48} Nations such as Cyprus had no clear ‘natural’ post-colonial territorial identity. Thus, these stands of literature have helped this chapter establish how the uncertainty of decolonisation opened a platform for sovereign imaginaries, such as partitionism, enosis, and takism to take hold in the island’s communities. By examining how the UN peacekeeping mission reinforced territorial and communal segregation through their military, diplomatic, and humanitarian practices, this

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp. 13-14.
\textsuperscript{45} Muschik, ‘Managing the World’.
chapter unearths the post-colonial uncertainties and member-state pressures underpinning UN peacebuilding operations in the 1960s.

Navigating a violent context following a late deployment

The historical legacies of inter-communal tensions and brutal colonial insurgency strategies created a highly volatile and militarised context in Cyprus by December 1963. In the 1950s, the Greek-Cypriot movement for independence instigated widespread violence against the British, supported by their mainland Greek allies. British counterinsurgency techniques were not restricted to combatants and many Cypriot civilians acquired arms to defend themselves and their families. This mobilized the population as Turkish-Cypriots fought to resist enosis whilst Greek-Cypriots fought against the island’s colonial administration. Following independence, political tensions between Greece and Turkey infected the island as both mainland nations transported propaganda, troops, and arms to Cyprus. With the two communities holding vastly different views of the future for the island, all issues of governance rapidly acquired sectarian meaning. The new constitution mandated that the Cypriot President must identify as Greek-Cypriot and Vice-President as Turkish-Cypriot, and that they should be independently elected by their own communities as a form of representation. However, the 1963 crisis exposed Greek-Cypriot resentment of Turkish-Cypriot constitutional protections. As the conflict erupted, the British army constructed roadblocks between the two communities, termed the Green Line, positioning the Greek-Cypriots alongside the national governance buildings. The experience of the minority Turkish-Cypriot community during this period further entrenched their identity as a persecuted group. In an echo of the British counterinsurgency characterisation of Greek-Cypriots as ‘terrorists’, the Greek-Cypriots defined all Turkish-Cypriot political activism as part of a rebellion that sought to destroy the Republic.

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50 French, Fighting EOKA, p. 305.
52 ‘Greeks And Turks In Street Battles’, The Times, 23rd December 1963.
54 UNA, S-0869-0001-02-00001, ‘Urquhart’s Confidential Notes on meeting held in the Secretary-General’s Conference Room at 11am on Thursday, 23 July 1964’, p. 3.
55 French, Fighting EOKA, p. 305.
56 UNA, S-0870-0001-04-00001, ‘Notes: Meeting between Archbishop Makarios and Ralph Bunche: Meeting held at the Presidential Palace, Nicosia, on Thursday 9 April 1964 from 11.10am to 12.50pm’, pp. 5-7.
The scale of violence across the country alarmed the international community. British, Turkish, and Greek governments agreed that an international peacekeeping force would be the most effective way to deescalate the crisis and prevent its expansion to mainland – or superpower – involvement. However, who would lead this peacekeeping force remained contentious. During this period, the British stepped into an intermediary role on a temporary basis with a Truce Force, just as they had during the UNEF mission, and discussed their hopes for a NATO mission in Cyprus with the US. The Turkish government also supported a NATO-based solution, particularly one that would include the US, as an alternative to their own plans to invade the island. However, the Greek government forcefully rejected the option of a NATO force as they were already concerned about Britain’s involvement and, instead, insisted that the UN Security Council was the only acceptable operator. Thus, even for a member of NATO, the UN was the preferable ‘non-aligned’ option for governments seeking an international mission, due to its breadth of state-membership.

In addition to fears about continued British involvement, the Greek government recognised the vulnerability of the island to Cold War instrumentalisation. The Athens correspondent reported in *The Economist*, ‘This eagerness to take cover under the so-called UN “umbrella” may not be unconnected with the Russians’ keen display of interest in the Cyprus problem’. As in Congo, the UN mission was understood (by the Greek government) to be a means of staving off Soviet influence from the vulnerable host population. Britain reluctantly deferred to the UN and agreed to the Force as a workable option. The Foreign Office made plans to comply with the UN’s Force to retain their military assets on the island: Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs). The British government had justified their continued involvement in Egyptian territory in 1956 under a similar pretext, but due to heightened Cold War anxieties during the Cyprus conflict the American government and UN leadership were more supportive of the British maintaining their military presence in the host territory in 1964 than they were in 1956. The SBAs contained the two main British bases: Akrotiri, a south-eastern coastal port, and Dhekelia, a south-western coastal port, totalling 3% of the island. These ports were not only of strategic benefit to the British government; the island had recently become a crucial military base.

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60 Ker-Lindsay, *Britain and the Cyprus Crisis*, pp. 48-49.
63 British SBA Administration website, ‘Background’ [available at https://www.sbaadministration.org/index.php/background accessed on 19/05/2019].
for NATO’s Middle-Eastern and anti-Soviet operations due to the Suez Crisis. As Ker-Lindsay has argued, ‘Turkey, in particular, was regarded as a vital component of NATO’s security against the Soviet Union as it was the West’s only direct non-arctic route into the USSR’. Thus, Cyprus held a unique position in Anglo-American Cold War interests in 1964, following the loss of the Suez Canal.

During the construction of UNFICYP, it became increasingly apparent that participation in a peacekeeping mission was significantly less attractive if member-states were suspicious of the mission’s success. The operational and financial controversies of the Congo mission had damaged the willingness of nations to contribute troops and fiscal support to the Cyprus mission, in contrast with the popularity of the UNEF mission, despite the perceived success of UNTEA. A *New York Times* article reported Thant’s difficulties, ‘in trying to recruit the new force [indicating] the mounting problems such operations face’. ONUC put the organisation in significant debt and the UN’s financial precarity occupied the Secretariat’s attention throughout 1964. In response to Thant’s letters to member-states requesting donations, some nations, such as Denmark, cautiously made offers. Nations were reluctant to participate in the mission due to the risk that it might be accused of partiality. Denmark donated forty police officers to UNFICYP on the condition that the Force was, ‘to refrain from any notion designed to influence the political solution in Cyprus except through contributing to a restoration of quiet.’ Nations negotiated their contributions on the condition that they would not become embroiled in the same ‘storm of criticism’ as had surrounded ONUC. Eventually, Thant was able to recruit 6,411 personnel and deploy them to Cyprus by 8th June 1964. The military contingents were donated by Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, and Sweden, shifting the battalion nationalities from Global South dominated during to UNEF to Global North exclusivity during UNFICYP. The UNFICYP leadership officially took-over from the British-led Truce Force in March 1964 once Thant had confirmed the finances and contingents for UN deployment.

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65 Ker-Lindsay, *Britain and the Cyprus Crisis*, p. 9.


68 UNA, S-0869-0001-01-00001, ‘Letter from Hans Tabor, Danish Permanent Representative to the UN, to U Thant, 4 May 1964’, p. 106.

69 Ibid.


72 Ibid.
The UNFICYP leadership attempted to make the transfer from the British Truce Force to the UN Force as transparent as possible; echoing the UNTEA flag ceremonies, ‘The British flag was lowered at sundown of 26 March and the United Nations flag was hoisted at sunup of 27 March and the members of the United Kingdom contingent of UNFICYP donned blue berets, blue scarves and United Nations shoulder emblems’.\footnote{UNA, S-0869-0003-14-00001, ‘Press Release CYP/21: Lieutenant-General P.S. Gyani Assumes Command of United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, 27 March 1964’, p. 38.} Dressed in recently dispatched ONUC uniforms, almost seven thousand troops arrived into Cyprus in March 1964, many directly from active duty as part of Congo or UNEF missions.\footnote{UNA, S-0869-0001-01-00001, ‘Communique issued by the Swedish Government in Stockholm on 10 April 1964, p. 61; UNA, S-0869-0002-09-00001, ‘Note RE Initial Group for Administrative Arrangements for Cyprus (UNFICYP), 5 March 1964’, p. 29.} This inheritance of other mission uniforms and personnel illustrated the rapid transition from the end of the Congo mission to the new geopolitical context of the Cyprus conflict. The troops enjoyed the ‘small-world’ nature of peacekeeping missions and joked about the temporary nature of deployment.

Fig. 25. Racist cartoon in The Blue Beret indicating the number of ex-ONUC troops (particularly Irish and Canadian) in UNFICYP, UNFICYP Edition, 18th May 1964 - © UN Information Office

The Force was deployed into a highly volatile environment where bomb attacks, heavily armed civilians, and a lack of logistics regularly threatened the safety of the UNFICYP troops. The Cyprus conflict had been going over for over four months by the time UNFICYP arrived on the island at the end of March 1964, and so the leadership had to begin tackling the situation on the back-foot. Thus, just as in UNEF, British military and technical support was instrumental during these early months.\footnote{BNA, FO 371/174764, C/1201 183, ‘Memo from Foreign Office to Ministry of Defence, 25 May 1964’.} As the British troops joined the UNFICYP mission around a month before the other nationalities arrived on the island, the unilateral character of the mission...
attracted criticism from the Greek-Cypriot community. The SBAs made vehicles and material available to the UN troops to make up the UNFICYP shortage. Additionally, British troops were seconded into the UNFICYP and provided with UN uniforms. The ‘seconded personnel would be considered as members of UNFICYP’, indicating the formalisation of this relationship. This secondment was a technical addition to the permanent British contingent of over three thousand troops who were already participating in the Force. The UN leadership in New York were initially supportive of the collaborative relationship. In a letter to the British government in October 1964, Thant praised the British troops supporting the UNFICYP mission staff and encouraged the collaboration. SBA influence extended to the command structure of UNFICYP as the ‘existing British command structure [was] used as a framework’. The UNFICYP leadership cloned their administrative and logistical procedures from British colonial command structures. Therefore, the British troops not only helped to restore law and order across the island but inspired the UNFICYP command pattern for the mission.

In addition to material and logistical assistance, the relationship with the SBAs was more than just a professional collaboration. Deputy Force Commander A. J. Wilson, a British officer, reflected in his memoir that many of the UNFICYP troops regularly used the SBA buildings as a ‘splendid escape’ and ‘relaxation from the stresses and strains of the Cyprus problem’, building friendships and taking time away from the pressures of peacekeeping. He suggested that the collaboration also improved the reputation of the British army for those who served in Cyprus. Although British troops had been explicitly excluded from the UNEF mission, they became integral to UNFICYP, suggesting that the UN leadership had become more concerned with thwarting Cold War threats from the USSR than colonial regimes. Thus, friendships between British troops and their peacekeeping colleagues encouraged mixing between the two forces and blurred the distinction between UN and British military spaces, challenging the image of impartiality of the UNFICYP mission.

77 UNA, S-0869-0002-09-00001, ‘Note RE Initial Group for Administrative Arrangements for Cyprus (UNFICYP), 5 March 1964’, p. 29.
78 Ibid.
79 Neil Briscoe has argued that many of the British troops found it difficult to adjust to the ‘spirit’ of peacekeeping, despite the blue berets, Briscoe, Britain and UN Peacekeeping, pp. 186-187.
82 UNA, S-0869-0001-01-00001, ‘Cable from U Thant to Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the UN, 29 October 1964’, p. 200.
85 Ibid.
However, the UN Secretariat staff became increasingly concerned with the potential repercussions of the collaboration following a series of attacks by Greek-Cypriots aimed at British UN troops and worried it could potentially threaten the population’s trust in the UN mission and thereby jeopardise law and order. In spite of Thant’s communications with the British government emphasising his gratitude for their support, Bunche privately cabled temporary UNFICYP Force Commander General Gyani, an Indian national, to caution him about accusations of ‘inheriting’ the British colonial authority in Cyprus. Gyani’s role as Force Commander in UNEF from 1959-1963 and head of the UN Yemen Observer mission (UNYOM) in 1963 had given him extensive experience in the Middle East and protracted ethno-nationalist conflicts. Although acknowledging that ‘most of our administrative support will be from SBAs’, the UN leadership in New York were keen to avoid any perception of ‘relieving’ the British. Bunche encouraged Gyani to recognise that, despite the ‘excellent’ role played by the British in supporting UNFICYP operations in the early months, ‘it is equally to our interest that the predominance of British troops [be] reduced as soon as possible to give the Force an international look’. These fears were beginning to manifest on the ground as the ‘inheritance’ of responsibilities threatened the delicate diplomatic balance that UNFICYP had established with the Greek-Cypriot government. General Carver, Commander of the British UNFICYP troops, reflected that the Greek-Cypriots remained suspicious of the British troops despite their employment in the UN Force. He commented, ‘As might be expected, the Greek-Cypriots did not regard British troops, who donned UN insignia, as the genuine article’. Briscoe cites the kidnap and murder of two British servicemen by the local population as evidence of growing hostility towards the British troops, despite their UN uniform.

The neo-colonial implications of the relationship between the British troops and the UN mission became increasingly concerning for contributing nations too, especially once the UNFICYP’s logistical capacities improved and additional contingents arrived on the island. In a meeting with the Secretariat leadership and UNFICYP contributing governments, the Swedish and Danish Ambassadors, already reluctant to participate in the mission, emphasised their hesitance in accepting the British troops into the Force. Thus, the UN Force leadership

88 Ibid.
91 Briscoe, Britain and UN Peacekeeping, p. 186.
92 UNA, S-0869-0001-01-00001, ‘Letter from Hans Tabor, Danish Permanent Representative to the UN, to U Thant, 4 May 1964’, p. 106.
93 UNA, S-0869-0001-02-00001, ‘Notes on the meeting held in the Secretary-General’s conference room at 4.30pm on 12 June 1964 to discuss the future of UNFICYP’, p. 18.
accepted the neo-colonial character of the relationship as long as it benefitted their operations but as soon as the mission was sufficiently resourced, they sought to distance UN operations from the British SBAs.

Instances of shooting between Greek-Cypriots and British UN units revealed anti-UN feeling among the Cypriot communities, prompting diplomatic intervention from the UN mediator Sakari Tuomioja. As the Greek-Cypriot troops targeted posts held by British UN troops in the village of Ayios Theodors, they also fought with Turkish-Cypriots in the northeast of the island, in the St. Hilarion Castle.\(^{94}\) Turkish-Cypriot civilians had taken shelter in the castle and the surrounding hills as they tried to defend their position from machine-gun and mortar siege from Greek-Cypriot fighters. This on-going attack, in addition to other recent violent clashes between the communities, prompted one hundred and fifty Turkish-Cypriot women to demonstrate outside the home of their leader, Vice President Fazıl Küçük whilst Gyani was visiting in the late afternoon of 26\(^{th}\) April 1964.\(^{95}\) The Washington Post reported that up to five hundred onlookers witnessed the Turkish-Cypriot protestors shout ‘Death to Gyani’ and ‘Gyani, butcher of Moslems’.\(^{96}\) Some threw stones at the Vice-President’s house, forcing Gyani to leave through a back door.\(^{97}\) On the same day, five thousand Turkish-Cypriot women and children demonstrated against the UN mission in Nicosia, ‘accusing it of doing nothing to prevent “massacres” of civilians’.\(^{98}\) Tuomioja travelled to Athens and Cyprus to talk to Cypriot leaders about the violence against UNFCYP troops and the escalating violence on the island.\(^{99}\) After ordering a ceasefire on the St Hilarion castle siege, Thant responded to Turkish-Cypriot criticisms of the failure of the UNFICYP in preventing the killings, arguing that, ‘It would be incongruous, even a little insane, for that force [UNFICYP] to set about killing Cypriots, whether Greek or Turkish, to prevent them from killing each other’.\(^{100}\) However, much like the Congolese and Afro-Asian member-state criticism faced by the ONUC leadership for the mission’s lack of intervention in the ‘domestic politics’ of the Katanga secession,\(^{101}\) voices within the international media insisted that responding to this kind of context was the very purpose of

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\(^{94}\) ‘The attack on St Hilarion’, The Guardian, 29\(^{th}\) April 1964.


\(^{96}\) Ibid.

\(^{97}\) Ibid; ‘Nicosia mob stones auto of UN Chief’, Chicago Tribune, 27\(^{th}\) April 1964.

\(^{98}\) ‘Nicosia mob stones auto of UN Chief’, Chicago Tribune, 27\(^{th}\) April 1964.


\(^{100}\) ‘Greeks End Assaults on Castle’, The Baltimore Sun, 30\(^{th}\) April 1964.


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the peacekeeping function of the UN, intervening in violent attacks to save lives, and called on the UNFICYP to ‘get tough’. Thus, the mission leadership’s hesitation to use force, in the aftermath of Congo operations in Katanga, despite the violence against Turkish-Cypriots, negatively affected both local and international views.

The implications of the escalating violence became evident as the UN mission struggled to respond to the Turkish-Cypriot refugee crisis. The Force arrived four months into the ongoing forced displacement of thousands of Turkish-Cypriots into improvised refugee camps, largely in the northern and central regions of Kokkina and Nicosia. In response to the community’s rejection of the Greek-Cypriot government’s authority, the leadership of the Turkish-Cypriot community imposed a partition between the groups, beginning with mixed villages across the island. Widespread reports, beginning in January 1964, recorded humanitarian and human rights abuses of the Turkish-Cypriot community by their own military. For example, a UN Press Release described Turkish-Cypriot civilians’ resistance to violent displacement or resettlement to demarcated Turkish-Cypriot regions and many begged to remain with their Greek-Cypriot neighbours. The de facto creation of partition between the two communities was criticised by the Greek-Cypriot leadership, who saw it as a step closer to a Turkish invasion. However, Makarios also strategically benefited from having the Turkish-Cypriots confined to villages across the island.

The displacement crisis may have been caused by the paramilitary leadership of the Turkish-Cypriot community, but the economic hardships imposed on the displaced communities were orchestrated by the Greek-Cypriot government. The Cypriot military repeatedly cut off the Turkish-Cypriot refugees’ water and food supplies, provoking violence between the communities. Thant announced in his Security Council report that,

the economic restrictions being imposed against the Turkish communities in Cyprus, which in some instances have been so severe as to amount to veritable siege, indicate that the Government of Cyprus seeks to force a potential solution by economic pressure as a substitute for military action.

The new UN Force Commander, Indian General, Kodandera Thimayya, described the 1,000 Turks remaining in the Kokkina beachhead as “starving” and … [Thimayya] expected new fighting to break out between Greek and 

104 UNA, S-0870-0001-04-00001, ‘Meeting held at Dr Kucuk’s Residence, Nicosia on Thursday 9 April 1964 from 1735 to 2010 hours’, p. 15.
Turkish-Cypriots. “The Turks cannot go on living much longer” He said. There was only a week’s supply of food in Kokkina and no water or cooking oil. He said that the Turkish-Cypriots were getting “worked up” and unless the economic squeeze being increased was stopped, they would begin to feel it.106

The Turkish-Cypriot leadership would not let civilians leave and the Greek-Cypriot leaders were blockading the camps to force them to break the partition, putting the vulnerable population on the frontline.107

Despite a lack of humanitarian mandate, training, or resources, the armed troops assumed a humanitarian role, adopting responsibility for the delivery of relief to Cypriot internally displaced persons (IDPs). Michael Harbottle, Chief of Staff for the Cyprus Force 1966-68, argued that the Force’s contribution to the conflict diversified during the economic blockade as, “The military therefore were very much involved and more often than not had to play the roles of adjudicator, appeaser, and provider”.108 Troops improvised and built temporary housing in the displacement camps near Nicosia, housing approximately 1,500 Turkish-Cypriots in tents in June 1964, over half of whom were children.109 The troops built ‘provisional sub-shaded bamboo roofs which will be used as shelters during the hottest period of the day’.110 The bamboo roofs prevented dehydration and provided shade during the Cypriot summer. Concern for the health and wellbeing of displaced children also led to the construction of ‘a provisional classroom’ by UNFICYP engineering corps in order to ‘encourage the continuation of school classes, using a provisional construction of cables and bamboo mats… some open-air showers are also being installed where at certain times of the day water could be sprayed over the children’.111 Thant reported this to the Security Council but did not consult with the population regarding their needs. He followed up on this in his next report in September 1964 to assert that the survival of many of the refugee children in this region was directly attributable to the actions of the UN troops.112 These activities blurred the mission’s mandate as a military Force and falsely cast them as humanitarians.

The lack of resources or training for the troops meant that their improvised humanitarian efforts were not always effective, especially in responding to the housing crisis in refugee camps. Over the winter months, the refugee camps near Nicosia – with improvised bamboo roofs –

107 Ibid., p. 28.
108 Harbottle, The Impartial Soldier, p. 29.
109 UN Doc, S/5764, ‘Report to the Security Council on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus, for the period 26 April to 8 June 1964 / By the Secretary-General’, p. 29.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
were devastated by very heavy rainfall and severe flooding. Turkish-Cypriots were particularly affected as ‘many houses...are not very solidly built of mud bricks...[which caused families] to be rendered homeless by bad weather’. Unable to provide a solution for the homeless families, the troops donated ‘four small tents’ to the villagers and extended ‘its good offices’ to the Government of Cyprus to try and bring attention to the situation. Rather than finding a long-term, meaningful solution to the displacement and housing crisis, the mission leadership organised palliative, short-term, improvised solutions.

The Force organised relief donations to the refugees during the summer of 1964 in collaboration with the ICRC. Humanitarian efforts were shared between the UNFICYP staff and the Joint Relief Commission – acting under the auspices of the ICRC – and Turkish Red Crescent. UNFICYP coordinated relief supplies from the Red Crescent which were then distributed by the Joint Relief Commission, a small organisation established by the ICRC but entirely staffed with British nationals, with consent from the Cyprus Government. The Turkish Red Crescent provided ‘food and medical supplies, tents, clothing, etc’ in regular shipments and were the primary donors of relief to the Turkish-Cypriot population. However, burdened by the relief efforts as a financial and operational inconvenience, the UN leadership were keen to push responsibility for the relief operations onto the ICRC as soon as possible.

In response, the ICRC leadership voiced concerns about the political nature of the displacement crisis in Cyprus. ICRC delegates had been on the island since 1st January 1964 and they had hoped that the UN Force would assume responsibility for the organisation of relief once established. In May 1964 the ICRC leadership sent a cable to Thant, arguing:

The United Nations having now assumed responsibility for the maintenance of order and peace in Cyprus, the ICRC is of the opinion that the United Nations Forces political adviser, [Flores] in cooperation with all those concerned, should deal with relief...The main problem

114 Ibid., p. 59.
119 UNA, S-0079-0005-06, ‘Memo between Deputy Director of European Office of the UN, Palthey, and Bunche’, 3 June 1964.
facing any relief agency in Cyprus today is basically of a political nature, and as such it cannot be dealt with by the Red Cross.\textsuperscript{121}

ICRC practices were guided by principles of neutrality and impartiality and providing humanitarian aid to the Turkish-Cypriots potentially threatened how they would be seen by the Cypriot and Greek governments. This reluctance to take responsibility for the displacement crisis from both the UN and ICRC, suggested the political nature of the work and the organisations’ recognition of its complexity. In short, the ICRC leadership saw the situation as too political for them, while the UN leadership saw it as too humanitarian.

However, the potential optics of a famine during a UN mission persuaded the UN leadership to compromise with the ICRC.\textsuperscript{122} The mission leadership rejected the ICRC’s reports that the UN had ‘assumed the running of relief operations’ and insisted that it just assisted in ‘their smooth running’.\textsuperscript{123} The UNFICYP remained reluctant to take official responsibility for what they deemed a ‘very difficult task, if not an impossible one’, complicated by political dynamics and operational shortcomings.\textsuperscript{124} Despite these protests, the unofficial mandate of Cyprus relief work from July 1964 onwards was held by the UN Force with the ICRC providing additional support and personnel; the ICRC preferred to take ownership of ‘technical’ operations such as distribution of aid, which they deemed ‘neutral’.\textsuperscript{125} The negotiation of humanitarian responsibility in Cyprus delayed relief agencies from consulting the population about long-term solutions to the displacement crisis.

The month-to-month delivery of relief to displacement camps throughout the 1960s engrained dependency and left the refugees in a precarious position.\textsuperscript{126} This precarity threatened the supply of relief to the displacement camps and made the refugees vulnerable to Greek-Cypriot instrumentalisation. In September 1964, Red Crescent supplies were denied entry to the country by the Greek-Cypriot police.\textsuperscript{127} Thant authorised Thimayya to send emergency supplies to Kokkina as soon as possible. Accordingly, on 13\textsuperscript{th} September, 4,000 lbs of food from UNFICYP’s own stores were flown to Kokkina by two UNFICYP helicopters. Blankets and clothing were sent to Kokkina by lorry, under UNFICYP and Cyprus police escort.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{121} UNA, S-0079-0005-06, ‘Cable from ICRC to Secretary-General’, May 1964.
\textsuperscript{122} UNA, S-0079-0005-06, ‘Memo between Deputy Director of European Office of the UN, Palthey, and Bunche’, 3 June 1964.
\textsuperscript{123} UNA, S-0079-0005-06, ‘Inter-Office Memo from Flores to Rolz-Bennett, JBR/djh’, 28 July 1964.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{125} UNA, S-0079-0005-06, ‘Cable from ICRC to Secretary-General’, May 1964.
\textsuperscript{126} UN Doc, S/5764, ‘Report to the Security Council on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus, for the period 26 April to 8 June 1964 / By the Secretary-General’, pp. 28-29.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
The mission’s own limited stores were used to improvise a solution. The Force effectively worked as a palliative relief agency. Relying on regular deliveries from the Turkish Red Crescent every three months, in addition to the logistical and materiel assistance from the SBAs, the Force’s operational capacity was vulnerable to change or political interference. This led to disorganisation as the Force’s ‘fire-fighting’ implemented improvised solutions before turning to the next emergency, preventing sustainable assistance and putting vulnerable sections of the population at risk.

Once it was clear that the Force was unable to establish stable or long-term solutions to the displacement crisis, tensions within the camps rose. For those who had lived in the camps for almost a year, there appeared no recourse other than military action to encourage a political solution. The failure of the mission to resolve the Turkish-Cypriot displacement issue resulted in the perpetuation of structures of inequalities within the two communities. These geographic and identity-based patterns of displacement were repeated in future peaks of violence on the island. Inter-communal tensions incubated within the displacement camps as Turkish-Cypriot civilians and combatants waited for the opportunity to reclaim their governmental authority.

The Plaza moment

A year after the initial deployment of the Force to Cyprus, the leadership’s attention shifted to the impending publication of Galo Plaza’s, the UN mediator, report on the conflict. After fire-fighting violent outbreaks and humanitarian crises throughout 1964, UNFICYP troops had managed to institute a fragile ceasefire by December 1964, although the underlying inter-communal tensions remained unresolved. The mission leadership were now able to focus on the political dimensions of the crisis and its settlement.

The 1964 UN Security Council resolution authorised the UN mediator as an addition to the UNFICYP mission, although Thant emphasised the distinction between the two mandates. He characterised the military wing of the Force as impartial and apolitical. The Force was

133 UN Doc, S/6102, ‘Report by the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus: (for the period 10 September to 12 December 1964)’, 12th December 1964, p. 4.
deployed to establish a ceasefire along the Green Line; the political roots of the crisis were not its domain, nor were they within the oversight of the mandate.\textsuperscript{135} However, the conflict required a political solution and Thant recruited a UN mediator to work in parallel with the military Force. The activities of UNFICYP and the mediator were to be, ‘separate and distinct operations and are to be kept so in every respect’ despite practical recognition that the conditions for the withdrawal of the Force were in the hands of the mediator.\textsuperscript{136} The political activities of the UN mediator directly influenced the future of UNFICYP and the scale of its military operations. Thus, the military wing of the mission was inextricably linked to the explicitly political aims of the mediator, despite the UN leadership emphasising the separation between the two endeavours.

Thant’s decision in September 1964 to promote Ecuadorian politician, Galo Plaza, to the role of mediator in Cyprus stemmed from the unexpected passing of the previous mediator, Finnish diplomat Sakari Tuomioja, who had collapsed from a stroke whilst negotiating with the interested parties in Geneva and in the midst of drafting his report for the Security Council.\textsuperscript{137} Tuomioja’s approach had been to emphasise contact with all the guarantor states and he spent most of his mediation period in Geneva. During the few months he was investigating, he ‘made [himself] available for consultations, as appropriate, with the diplomatic representatives of other States’.\textsuperscript{138} Plaza’s appointment was unsurprising and The New York Times reported that he had been ‘thought of immediately’ for the role due to his existing position with UNFICYP as Thant’s special representative.\textsuperscript{139} Plaza had been on the ground in previous peacekeeping missions such as the observation mission to Lebanon (UNOGIL) in 1958,\textsuperscript{140} and had replaced Bunche as special representative in ONUC.\textsuperscript{141} His successful efforts during UNOGIL in uniting religious leaders drew praise from Dag Hammarskjöld and he attracted the attention of Thant who was searching for a special representative to monitor the efforts of the UNFICYP mission in May 1964.\textsuperscript{142} On accepting his promotion to UN mediator in September 1964, Plaza remarked in a press conference that, ‘as a Latin American he felt he had a special understanding of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{135}{Ibid.}
\footnote{137}{Tuomioja’s mediator’s report was compiled by his legal and political advisers from his notes after he became ill: UNA, S-0870-0001-01, ‘Letter from Robert T Miller to U Thant’, 28 August 1964.}
\footnote{138}{UNA, S-0870-0001-01-00001, ‘Outline Organisation of an International Force for Cyprus by Major General Rikhye, 21 February 1964’, p. 5.}
\footnote{139}{S. Pope, ‘Problem for Thant’, The New York Times, 18th August 1964.}
\footnote{140}{K. Teltsch, ‘Ecuadorian Given UN Cyprus Role’, The New York Times, 12th May 1964.}
\footnote{141}{UN Doc, S/5691, ‘Report by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the operations of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus’, 11 May 1964, p. 2.}
\footnote{142}{G. Plaza, interviewed by Diego Cordovez, 28 March 1984 [available at: http://dag.un.org/handle/11176/89710 accessed on 06/05/2019], pp. 2-3.}
\end{footnotes}
Mediterranean problems’. In an interview with the UNFICYP Blue Beret magazine he clarified that ‘he was of Spanish origin and by ancestry a Mediterranean himself. This made it possible, he said, not to believe in extreme positions’. Politically, Plaza was highly supportive of the UN’s operations and the Charter’s strategy for global governance, perceiving the UN as functionally imperative for peaceful international communication. Recognising the odd restrictions placed on a peacekeeping mission such as UNFICYP, staffed entirely by troops and military staff but only mandated to defend, he described the mission at a UN press conference as ‘the most unmilitary military activity’ he had ever known. He also sympathised with the trained soldiers and officers within UNFICYP who had spent their lives training to fight a war, now employed in ways that meant their battalion, ‘could never win a battle, whilst on the other [hand] it could never be defeated’.

Plaza’s focus on the ‘final solution’ of the UNFICYP mission and rejection of the London-Zurich Agreement in his 1965 report was more radical than Tuomioja. The previous mediator had accepted the terms of the London-Zurich Agreement and had attempted to build upon the guarantor states’ interests, as protected in the Agreement, before he became ill. Plaza’s decision to immediately change tack and announce that, ‘the very fact that a mediator had been appointed was proof that a new solution had to be found’ concerned the state actors who signed the Agreement, especially the Turkish government. Plaza argued that the guarantor states (Britain, Turkey and Greece) should no longer be prioritised over the Cypriot population. A Washington Post article interpreted this to mean that ‘the best way for solving the bitter Cyprus impasse is to abandon the old concept that Greece and Turkey must come together and instead let the talking begin with the two factions most immediately involved, the Greek and Turkish residents of Cyprus itself’. Pre-Plaza, the UNFICYP mediator’s policy was to rely on Turkey

147 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
and Greece to negotiate the territory’s future. ‘My first concern,’ Plaza argued, ‘was to return the scene of mediation to the island of Cyprus’.  

Invalidating Greece’s claim to the island further, Plaza claimed in his report that, based upon his consultation of the Greek-Cypriot community, the desire for *enosis* was waning in favour of a more traditional form of independence. In a private letter to Thant, Plaza noted: something [Makarios] does not want and a growing number of people in Cyprus agree with him [upon], is *Enosis* although he must pay lip service to this vague and never clearly defined aspiration which still has its followers in rural areas and among those that do not realise that their country in many ways, is drifting away from *Enosis* in the direction of unfettered independence.

Despite the Greek-Cypriot community’s demands for *enosis* throughout the 1950s, by 1965 many within the community had begun to question whether moving from one colonial power to the annexation of another would be the correct choice for Cyprus.

Following months of meetings, travelling and negotiations between 28th September 1964 and 22nd March 1965, Plaza’s sixty-six-page report was finally delivered to the Secretariat on 26th March 1965. Thant received the report only a week after the UN Security Council decision to extend the mission for another three months on 19th March 1965, securing UNFICYP’s position on the ground during the potentially incendiary period immediately following the report’s distribution. Force Commander, Thimayya took precautions to anticipate any negative local reactions and expectations were heightened as Cypriots awaited the responses of the Turkish, Greek, and British governments. Describing the vitality and hope of Plaza’s report, a *New York Times* article on 1st April 1965 promoted it as injecting, ‘a new factor that [could] serve as a basis for another state towards quenching one of the most dangerous fires in the world’. Thant attached an endorsement of the report to the Security Council document before he published it to the member-states and reminded the interested parties that the mediator would return to Cyprus in a month’s time to put ‘himself at the disposal of the parties in any way he may usefully serve’. Plaza’s report presented a moment for the country to pull away from the guarantor state interests that had historically increased inter-communal divisions rather than worked to

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153 Ibid., p. 41.
remedy them. Unsurprisingly, senior UN officials pronounced the report ‘brilliant’ to Guardian reporter Hella Pick.\textsuperscript{159} However, they acknowledged that the complicated political context in Cyprus might prevent any real change and were reportedly ‘sanguine’ about the implementation of Plaza’s recommendations.\textsuperscript{160}

International responses to the report varied and ignited tensions between the UN Force and the Turkish government. The Greek-Cypriot representative, President of the Cypriot Parliamentary House and close advisor to Makarios, Glafcos Clerides was the first politician to make an official comment on the report.\textsuperscript{161} The Cyprus Mail recorded him describing it as a ‘bold and welcome’ report.\textsuperscript{162} A New York Times article published in April 1965 reported that the Greek government antagonised the Turks by stating that ‘the continuation of Mr Plaza as mediator would be an essential condition for the solution of the Cyprus problem’.\textsuperscript{163} In stark contrast, the Turkish government and Turkish-Cypriot leadership accused Plaza of abusing of his mediatory jurisdiction and producing a pro-Greek-Cypriot document.\textsuperscript{164} Turkish Ambassador Orhan Erlap called for Plaza’s resignation, suggesting that he had gone ‘beyond [the] terms of reference specified in the 4 March 1964 resolution of the Security Council’.\textsuperscript{165} Turkish-Cypriot representative Rauf Denktash made a speech to the Security Council in August 1965, describing Plaza’s report as ‘a shield for the [Greek] ulterior motives’.\textsuperscript{166} Meanwhile, although the Greek government complained that the report did not see enosis as the solution to the conflict, broadly they accepted Plaza’s recommendations.

Thant promptly defended Plaza’s report in a letter to Erlap but the damage to Plaza’s reputation was permanent for the Turkish government in Ankara.\textsuperscript{167} Turkey’s allies within NATO were upset by its reaction to the report and critical of their dismissal of the UN mediator’s recommendations. A Washington Post article reported that, ‘if the Cypriot situation defied solution at least it should not be deprived of a UN mediation effort to keep it from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{159} H. Pick, ‘Two sides urged to meet in Cyprus: Senor Galo Plaza’s report’, The Guardian, 31 March 1965.
\item \textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{161} These positive comments about the Plaza report were expanded on in the following document: UNA, S-0079-0007-11, ‘Communication addressed to the Mediator from President Makarios’, 25 May 1965.
\item \textsuperscript{162} ‘Clerides calls for ‘careful thought’: “End to wishful thinking”, Cyprus ‘at threshold of momentous decisions’, Cyprus Mail, 1\textsuperscript{st} April 1965.
\item \textsuperscript{163} UNA, S-0869-0001-10-00001, ‘Clipping: New York Times, “Turkish Cypriots Cool to UN Plan”, Friday, 2 April 1965’, p. 76.
\item \textsuperscript{165} UNA, S-0869-0002-04-00001, ‘Letter from Erlap, Turkish Permanent Mission to the UN to U Thant, 31 March 1965’, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{167} S. Pope, ‘Cyprus Mediator Backed by Thant: UN Leader says Turkey’s move against Plaza could wreck settlement hopes’, The New York Times, 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 1965.
\end{itemize}
worsening. That is why Turkey’s call for Plaza’s dismissal seems disappointing to Turkey’s friends. The dispute over the UNFCIYP mediator provided guarantor states, particularly Turkey, with an opportunity to stall any attempt at a political solution to the Cyprus conflict. The shock of the Turkish government’s ‘prompt and unexpected rejection of Mr Plaza’s report’ reverberated around the globe.

Rolz-Bennett wrote to Plaza in April to applaud the report and the responses it had provoked:

Your report has dramatized the need and urgency of such negotiations and, by the impact [...] has improved the prospect of bringing them about. In this respect, it has achieved its primary objective of dislodging the Cyprus problem from its “dead centre”. We all believe that the momentum created by your report should not be wasted through prolonged inaction and that an attempt should be made soon to bring about the proposed direct negotiations, but the question is, what is the best way of doing so in the present?

Plaza resigned on 22 December 1965, accepting that he would not be able to continue his negotiations following the Turkish government’s reaction. Plaza remained involved in the conflict and, privately, continued to consult with Thant on ‘the Cyprus question’, despite the end of his formal role as UNFICYP mediator. Initially he was not replaced. Michael Harbottle, Chief of Staff for the Cyprus Force 1966-68, recalled that this period was hopeless for the UNFICYP mission. He commented that, ‘On the political side, matters were at an even greater standstill and no glimmer of light was visible; if anything the political scene by the middle of 1965 was probably as gloomy as it could be’. In February 1966, Thant sent Rolz-Bennett to Cyprus to explore the possibility of a new mediator and to keep the channels of negotiation open while the Cyprus Force was still on the ground. Rolz-Bennett took advantage of his visits to Ankara and Athens to meet face-to-face with the mainland countries’ leaders. Confirming the suspicions in the New York headquarters, Rolz-Bennett’s memo to Thant recorded that, ‘the prospects of appointing a new Mediator are very dim, to say the least’. Harbottle, similarly,

169 At one point in the aftermath of Turkey’s rejection of the report, they were threatening to invade Cyprus. A dispatch from The Times in London reported, ‘In the last few days since Turkey’s abrupt rejection of a report submitted by the United Nations mediator for Cyprus, Galo Plaza Lasso, there has been rising anti-Western feeling in Turkey combined with bitter criticism of Greece. The Turks feel let down by the West over Cyprus’. See ‘Turks’ Intervention in Cyprus is Hinted’, The New York Times, 9th April 1965.
171 UNA, S-0079-00007-10, ‘Confidential letter from Rolz-Bennett to Galo Plaza’, 14 April 1965.
175 UNA, S-0869-0001-11-00001, ‘UN Internal Memo, Cyprus Mediation, 2 February 1966’, p. 3.
176 Ibid., pp. 1-3.
noted that ‘mediation had gone out of the window, at least for the time being, and both Governments of Cyprus and Turkey, for very different reasons, opposed the appointment of a new Mediator’. The damage to the UN’s reputation was done and, for the UN leadership, the immediate concern was regaining the trust of the mainland states in order to restore the UN’s position on the ground and, more pressingly, the institution’s international reputation for conflict response.

In the years following Plaza’s report, UNFICYP mediation efforts devolved from being a central function of the mission’s contribution to the conflict to a curtailed role, an additional duty for an existing mid-ranking official. On 2nd March 1966, Thant extended Carlos Bernardes’s duties as his special representative in Cyprus to include the employment of UN ‘good offices’. Bernardes was a Brazilian career diplomat who had been President of the Security Council in February 1964. However, Thant wrote to Plaza of his reluctance to move ‘too quickly in the direction of new political initiatives’ following the ‘impact caused by [Plaza]’, suggesting that Bernardes’s passivity was not unwelcome to the UN leadership in the post-Plaza era.

Whilst the UN special representatives and UN leadership placed their hopes on an external solution to the Cyprus conflict, President Makarios benefitted from the stagnant political environment on the island. Makarios’s political position as President of the Republic, had long been associated with the pursuit of enosis, due to his support of the policy throughout the 1940s and 1950s. However, following independence, Makarios recognised that his power base was in Cyprus, not Greece; the implementation of enosis would likely dilute his authority. Equally, a referendum, plebiscite, or any other form of self-determination would provide no clarification to what enosis would practically entail. Plaza found evidence of this confusion during his consultations. He wrote,

As a practical step [enosis] in the political evolution of Cyprus it has struck me, in discussions with a wide range of Greek-Cypriot opinion, as having a much less united and imperative driving force behind it. I understand Enosis to mean in its literal sense the complete absorption of Cyprus into Greece, but I would hesitate to say that this is what every Greek-Cypriot favouring it intends it to mean.

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178 Harbottle, *The Impartial Soldier*, p. 56.
179 UN Doc, S/7180, ‘Note by the Secretary-General’, 4th March 1966.
180 UNA, S-0309-0037-19, ‘Thant letter to Plaza, 6 April 1966’.
Makarios knew this too and recognised that if the population were asked to vote for enosis, there was no guarantee that they would share an understanding of what annexation would mean for Cyprus. For Makarios this could lead to political fracturing within the Greek-Cypriot community and a fatal crumbling of his political base.

Makarios’s alternative was to promote political stagnation and emphasise the impossibility of a settlement in Cyprus. His inactivity was preferable to a painful process of outlining a practicable vision of enosis; a vision that had yet to be determined within his own community, let alone with the increasingly unstable Greek government. Wilson, Deputy Force Commander, recollected that,

Makarios later remarked to me that he always worried if he saw two [Greek] Cypriots in conversation at a party or social occasion. The “outcome”, he remarked, “will almost certainly be another three parties” … Though most Greek-Cypriots were still reluctant to admit it, none of them by now, except for a few extremists, still wanted a genuine Enosis.

In response, Makarios used the military stability of UNFICYP as a crutch for his lack of political impetus. Whilst the Greek-Cypriots were at war with the Turkish-Cypriots, they each remained unified within their communities. Describing the Force as ‘insurance’ against any violence, Wilson believed that Makarios wished to prolong the conflict until Cyprus could announce independence and confirm Greek-Cypriot hegemony; thus, he could avoid ‘the need to make unpleasant decisions’. The palliative operations of the Force, in the absence of an effective mediatory policy, provided space for Makarios to protect his position rather than acknowledge the complex roots of the conflict and threaten his political authority.

The UN leadership and the nations contributing to the Force recognised the instrumentalisation of the mission as early as November 1966. A document drafted by Rolz-Bennett, revealed organisational anxieties about the continuing damage being done by the mission to the conflict and a lack of belief in the mission’s ability to resolve the crisis. Rolz-Bennett stated that contributing:

[g]overnments are disturbed by the impression given over the last several months, which the Secretary-General also shares, that the presence and activity of the peace-keeping force has tended to relieve the parties in dispute from the necessary sense of urgency in making a serious effort at finding the basis for a settlement. These misgivings have been aggravated by the well-known experience of the Mediator, and more profoundly, by its significance for the generally accepted

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185 Ibid., p. 10.
principles of United Nations mediation. The mediation process has been proved capable of being stultified by the particular attitude of a single party to the dispute.186

In the meantime, Alain L. Dangeard, Assistant in the Secretariat, wrote an internal report to emphasise these issues:

It may be argued that the presence of UNFICYP is still useful inasmuch as it limits the scope of unnecessary bloodshed on the island and also prevents the precipitation of an international crisis. In view, however, of the risks of UN's deeper involvement in internal disputes, and the precariousness of the financial support to be given to the UNFICYP operation, before suggesting to the Council the extension of the UNFICYP for three more months, the Secretary-General may attempt to gain firm assurances from the parties that they will work towards a settlement.187

These financial and diplomatic anxieties illustrate the significance of Plaza’s report in disrupting the UN leadership’s perception of the Cyprus conflict. Those within the Secretariat began to reconsider UNFICYP’s future contribution, continuing to focus on how a continued presence would appear to contributing nations and member-states, rather than how it might damage the population.

Rolz-Bennett’s attempts to undo the mistrust between state actors and the UNFICYP through his visits throughout 1966 did little to combat inter-communal conflict and instead re-focused the international community on the guarantors. The UN leadership was fixated on the potential political solutions offered by the mainland countries, such as double enosis or unification of the divided Cypriot communities with their respective mainland countries, rather than on encouraging political solutions to arise naturally from the Cypriot population.188 Rolz-Bennett and Thant’s journeys to the Mediterranean demonstrated their pursuit of a mainland state-led approach as they spent most of their time in Ankara and Athens.189 Meanwhile, Greece and Turkey announced that they had begun a ‘dialogue’ following the Plaza report and that these talks would not include a UN mediator.190 Plaza wrote to his assistant Liu, noting his shock that the British were involved in the dialogue: ‘It is surprising that they should pin such high hopes

187 UNA, S-1070-0030-01, ‘Confidential: Forthcoming Review by the Secretary-General of the Situation in Cyprus, Dangeard’s draft’, n.d.
189 UNA, S-0869-0001-12-00001, ‘Text of Instructions to be cabled by Secretary-General to Bernardes, 1 March 1966’, p. 10.
on the bilateral Greek-Turkish talks’, indicating that he did not have faith in the mainland discussions. Similarly, Harbottle argued that the Greek and Turkish governments used the existence of this ‘dialogue’ to phase out UN involvement in the political settlement in the Cyprus conflict, post-Plaza. Bernardes’s resignation on 5th January 1967 confirmed his lack of progress with the Greek and Turkish governments. The Director General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, Pier Spinelli, took on the role but only temporarily, perpetuating the inertia of the UN’s mediation efforts after Plaza.

The Canadian Ambassadors – Beaulne, Hearn, and Colonel Newlands – were also concerned about the role that the Force played in the political stagnation in Cyprus. They drew it to the attention of the secretary-general in a meeting of the UNFICYP contributing countries and the UN Secretariat on 7th December 1971, arguing that, ‘UNFICYP… has come to be regarded as a permanent feature in absence of progress on the political front. Unfortunately, this had tended to create the impression in some quarters that the presence of UNFICYP has itself contributed to the lack of political progress’. The Ambassadors emphasised that,

> It would be regrettable if the UNFICYP experience were to have the result of undermining confidence in the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations as a useful tool in dealing with the problems of international conflict. The importance of making progress towards a political settlement in Cyprus thus has relevance beyond the confines of the Cyprus dispute itself.

Highlighting how stagnation could lead to UNFICYP’s instrumentalisation, a Canadian Ambassador highlighted how the mission was likely to induce complacency within the Greek-Cypriot government, acting as a tool to increase inter-communal tensions on the island:

> The longer UNFICYP lasts, the greater is the risk that the presence of United Nations contingents [in Cyprus] will be taken for granted and will become such a part of the landscape in Cyprus that the parties to the dispute are tempted to use UNFICYP for their own advantage.

**Attempting to restore law, order, and the mainland states’ trust**

The period of relative stability from 1965-1967 was disrupted by inter-communal violence in villages across the country during the summer of 1967 in reaction to a military coup on mainland Greece. Thant had reduced the numbers of Force troops, due to a reduction in violence and

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193 UNA, S-0869-0001-12-00001, ’S/7642: Note by the Secretary-General, 20 December 1966’, p. 25.
194 UNA, S-0869-0001-02-00001, ‘Meeting of countries contributing to UNFICYP to be held on Tuesday, 7 December 1971 at 4pm in the Secretary-General’s Conference Room’, p. 67.
195 Ibid.
196 Ibid.
organisational financial constraints, from 6,275 personnel in December 1964 to 4,610 in December 1966, making the Force ill-equipped to respond to this rapid surge in violence in mid-1967. Distracted by the violence in Indo-Pakistan and the operations of the United Nations India-Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM) in 1965-1966, the UN Secretariat staff became disengaged from the situation in Cyprus, compounding the existing political stagnation on the island. However, the outbreak of violence in mainland Greek and Cyprus in 1967 re-focused organisational attention on the Mediterranean. Repeated instances of peacekeepers involving themselves in smuggling and the Cypriot black market had further obstructed UNFICYP’s demilitarisation mandate. As a depleted UNFICYP faced shooting and bombing across the island as stagnated hostilities erupted into full-blown warfare, threatening to provoke a Cold War superpower response.

Arms- and people-smuggling were crucial to the militarised environment of the 1960s and further compounded the civilian stockpiling issue. Thant had argued that civilian arms stockpiling was one of the greatest risks to the success of the Force in 1964. Beginning in early 1964, soldiers from Turkey and Greece arrived in ports across the country with large deliveries of weapons. Incoming soldiers had been a regular occurrence since July 1964 when it was reported that,

600 Greek-Cypriot servicemen return[ed] from […] service in the Greek army, and some 2,000 Greek-Cypriot students together with a few volunteers returning from study abroad, of whom some few may have been non-Greek-Cypriot. It would appear that a proportion of these students had, to some extent, organised themselves while abroad and, many may have had military training while in Greece.

Comparatively fewer Turkish-Cypriot troops had reached the coastline but those who did also brought imported arms and ammunition. These reports incited fear in several contributing governments with troops on the ground. Thant cabled the President of Cyprus and Prime Ministers of Greece and Turkey in an attempt to cease arms-smuggling from the mainland and emphasised that any 'party tending to increase the tension and the danger of armed clashes in

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200 UN Doc, S/5764, Report to the Security Council on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus, for the period 26 April to 8 June 1964 / By the Secretary-General’, p. 37.
201 UNA, S-0869-0003-08-00001, ‘Background notes on reports of build-up of arms and troops in Cyprus, 14 July 1964’, p. 2.
202 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
Cyprus at this time falls squarely within the terms of the resolution of the Security Council of 4 March 1964. However, despite Thant’s threats, the international influx of smuggled arms entering the island, especially from Greece and Turkey, continued.

Following initial concerns about civilian smuggling and stockpiling during the initial months of the mission, the Cyprus National Guard increased searches and patrols along the Green Line. The Guard discovered two UNFICYP officers and three UNFICYP troops of other ranks, all members of the Swedish UNFICYP contingent, on 24th September 1964, conducting ‘illicit carriage of arms’ in UN tanks (Annex 1). Arms were concealed in wheat sacks ‘donated by the people of the United States of America’ (as can be seen in Figure 26), suggesting the instrumentalisation and exploitation of humanitarianism by criminal peacekeepers.

![American wheat sack used to hold smuggled weapons](UNA/1070-0026-18)

The arrest report by the UNFICYP military police unit revealed that Cypriot police stopped the tank because they suspected smuggling, indicating that this was not a unique occurrence.

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204 UNA, S-0869-0002-11-00001, ‘Cable from Thant, 16 July 1964’, p. 5/6
Peacekeepers’ freedom of movement, as well as their permission to be armed, was repeatedly exploited for financial gain. The Cyprus police representative reported the notorious, “practice” of Swedish UNFICYP vehicles being used, by reason of their immunity from search by the Police, to transport Turkish Cypriots from one Turkish Cypriot village to another.208 A UNFICYP Board of Inquiry investigation headed by the Force Commander led to the return of the two officers to Sweden.209 The inquiry revealed that one was a member of a right-wing party in Sweden and had, initially, not been allowed to join the mission.210 Coincidentally, as part of the preliminary UNFICYP plans, Rolz-Bennett had specifically complimented the Swedish as ‘an ideal nationality [for peacekeeping] and wonderful people’.211

The Swedish battalion was not the only contingent caught committing criminal acts in Cyprus and, as the conflict progressed, other UN troops profited from the Cypriot war economy. The Cyprus police caught Finnish and Danish peacekeepers smuggling and selling their weapons (two submachine guns and one automatic rifle) to Cypriot fighters ‘on both sides’, contributing directly to the black market.212 Five Austrian peacekeepers were repatriated after smuggling of explosives to Turkish Cypriot fighters.213 Four British troops were court martialled by the Commander of the British Contingent214 for attempting to transport ammunition and weapons, cement, uniforms, and other ‘prohibited items’ for Turkish Cypriots.215 In their sworn statements to the Special Investigation Unit for the Force, the convicted troops confessed that they had been paid ‘five pounds of Cyprus currency’, following the delivery of ‘military type jackets’ by a UN Land Rover, and ‘eight pounds’ for the transport of cement.216 Penalties for the British troops ranged from nine months detention to eighteen months in prison and an ignominious discharge. These were not petty crimes.217

In another instance of British peacekeeper abuses, the Cypriot police caught two British UNFICYP troops, having been ‘suborned’ by Turkish-Cypriots, in January 1968.218 Thant made

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an official statement describing how these troops were, ‘involved in transporting materials and, on one occasion, in transporting a Turkish-Cypriot [dressed in a UNFICYP uniform]… The UNFICYP soldiers involved undertook over 20 journeys, [and] for each one they were paid £25 between them by the Turkish-Cypriots’. 219 This statement described the situation as one of UNFICYP soldiers being ‘suborned’ or corrupted by Turkish-Cypriots indicating that the Turkish-Cypriots were responsible for the crime. In the same statement, the revelation that Turkish-Cypriots used ‘British-type military vehicles’ with painted UN signs on the side is described as a ‘disturbing aspect’ of the case.220 ‘Furthermore’, he notes, ‘these vehicles were driven to rendezvous with UNFICYP soldiers by Turkish-Cypriots dressed in UNFICYP uniforms’.221 Despite their fellow troops’ repatriation and dismissal, UN peacekeepers continued to smuggle and sell arms to fighters under the guise of UNFICYP operations; their role as peacekeepers permitted their movements and weapons and the Force’s moral authority encouraged the police to give peacekeepers the ‘benefit of the doubt’. Peacekeeper participation in the arms smuggling trade on the island fed into the militarisation of the population, supplying the militias that they were explicitly mandated to demilitarise.

The Greek military coup in the spring of 1967, following a three-year power struggle between the monarchy and the left-wing and right-wing parties ignited inter-communal violence in Cyprus.222 The political victory was unstable and contested on the mainland.223 The ‘General’s Coup’ was characterised by tanks entering Athens and a large-scale operation to arrest opposing politicians and journalists, eventually numbering up to approximately 10,000 people.224 This context of change on the mainland ignited outbreaks of violence in Cyprus that had not been experienced since 1964.225

International anxiety at the coup in Greece challenged the stability and power that Makarios had enjoyed since independence from Britain as the policy of enosis returned to political importance. The new leadership in Athens were pro-American and right-wing, due to their long-term alliance with the CIA, seeking not only to install enosis in Cyprus but to remove all the politicians they believed to be left-leaning from power on the island, just as they had in Athens.226 Plans to annex Cyprus were popular with right-wing Greek-Cypriots on the island,

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220 Ibid.
221 Ibid.
225 Ş. Kıralp, ‘Cyprus between Enosis, Partition and Independence’, p. 593.
226 Ganser, NATO’s Secret Armies, p. 222.
who used the mainland coup as an opportunity to rebuild previously waning support for enosis. Makarios’s fears of internal factions within the Greek-Cypriot community became a reality and he worried about a coup in Cyprus, especially as the National Guard employed a significant number of Greek troops. In 1966, the Economist reported that there were between 8,500 to 10,000 ‘volunteer’ troops from mainland Greece in Cyprus, in addition to the ‘Greek army “training” officers in the 11,000-strong Cypriot national guard’.

Meanwhile, Makarios’s ideological position became a security problem for the UNFICYP mission. The new UNFICYP Force Commander General Armas-Eino Martola (a Finn) received evidence that Makarios had repeatedly smuggled arms from Czechoslovakia during 1967, despite the Archbishop’s public NAM affiliation. A Washington Post article argued that, ‘aggravating all this [the conflict with Turkish-Cypriots] has been Makarios’ recent acquisition of Soviet military equipment via Cairo, including the construction of ground-to-air missile sites’. Makarios used the imported Czech weapons to strengthen Greek-Cypriot paramilitary groups across the island that he then deployed into Turkish-Cypriot regions throughout the summer 1967, as he attempted to shore up his position. The UN Force attempted to confiscate the Czech weapons as further deliveries arrived over the next months, just as it had attempted to obstruct deliveries to the Congolese government during ONUC. In a private meeting in November 1967, the Greek Ambassador to the UN, Dimitrios Bitsios, commented that he ‘had had no information at all about this situation and manifested surprise about it’. The exclusion of the UNFICYP staff from important intelligence until the materiel was already distributed operationally stymied their ability to confiscate weapons but also indicated their disconnect from activities on the island. Additionally, the UNFICYP troops now had to prepare to combat parties supported by new Soviet-standard weaponry, rather than just colonial era left-overs.

A series of outbursts of serious violent attacks on both communities in November 1967 demonstrated to the UN leadership how geopolitically fragile the region had become. Two large-scale battles erupted in Kophinou, a village in the central-southern region, and Ayios Theodhoros, a village in the central-western region. The battle of Kophinou, in particular,

229 UNA, S-0869-0001-03-00001, ‘Notes on meeting in the Secretary-General’s office at 11.30am on 18 November 1967’, p. 3.
232 UNA, S-0869-0001-03-00001, ‘Notes on meeting in the Secretary-General’s office at 11.30am on 18 November 1967’, p. 3.
233 UNA, S-0869-0001-03-00001, ‘Notes on meeting with Greek Ambassador to the UN’, 18 Nov. 1967, p. 4.
became a significant embarrassment to the UN Force as Greek-Cypriot troops assaulted and stole weapons and ammunition from peacekeepers.234 UNFICYP Commander General Robert Pascoe argued that UN peacekeepers were targeted in the bomb attacks.235 The attacks in Turkish-Cypriot regions put civilians and UNFICYP troops on the frontline of the conflict, provoking the attention and condemnation of the Turkish government.236 The conflict in Ayios Theodhoros on 16 November 1967 was so violent that Thant argued in his report to the Security Council that the Cyprus National Guard had used ‘disproportionate force’.237 The Guard’s escalation in force against Turkish-Cypriots prompted threats of invasion from the Turkish government in Ankara if attacks continued.238 Subsequently, Reuters reported Greek-Cypriots evacuating Nicosia to the mountains in preparation for a Turkish invasion.239

Following the Plaza fallout, Greece and Turkey increasingly sought advice from state diplomats, particularly the US, side-lining the UN and UNFICYP leadership.240 The violence in mainland Greece had drawn the international community’s attention on the situation in the Mediterranean. As a result, the Cold War superpowers grew increasingly invested in the politics of the conflict as they sought to exploit this resurgence in fighting on the island for their own strategic goals. Whilst the UNFICYP mission staff focused on stabilising the island, the US government expanded their mediation efforts with the Turkish government, anxious to prevent Soviet involvement.241 The arrival of American special envoy Cyrus Vance in Ankara, sent by President Johnson,242 dissuaded the Turkish government from intervention and calmed the anxious Greek government.243 A month later, Thant requested that Greek and Turkish troops withdraw from the island and an expansion of UNFICYP pacification functions, including the

235 Ibid.
238 The UNFICYP’s military operations and attitude towards the Turkish threat of invasion as a response to the conflict in Ayios Theodhoros can be found in Harbottle, The Impartial Soldier.
243 Guney, ‘The USA’s Role in Mediating the Cyprus Conflict’, p. 32.
supervision of disarmament of all forces constituted after 1963.\(^{244}\) Both Turkish and Greek governments responded positively to Thant’s request in December 1967 with a joint agreement and implementation plan for the withdrawal of their materiel personnel and equipment.\(^ {245}\) However, the parties agreed to Thant’s request weeks after Vance’s mediation had already diminished the threat of mainland intervention. The UN mission, previously at the forefront of the mediation process in Cyprus, had been circumvented in high-diplomatic discussions in preference of an envoy from their NATO ally.\(^ {246}\) As the Turkish Foreign Minister Zeki Kuneralp stated, ‘The UN could not solve the conflicts. It was seen in the last crises of Cyprus that it was solved especially by American influence.’\(^ {247}\)

Emphasising this shift away from UN mediation, the secretary-general’s invitation was, initially, omitted from intercommunal talks that were to be held at NATO Council meetings in Lisbon and Paris in November 1971.\(^ {248}\) Christos Xanthopoulos-Palamas and Osman Olcay, NATO Foreign Ministers, suggested a four-party negotiation conference (Greece, Turkey, Britain and Cyprus) at the NATO meeting.\(^ {249}\) Palamas and Olcay offered the secretary-general an opportunity to announce the agreement to pursue these talks. Rather than accepting this deal and accepting the UN’s limited role in mediating the process over the past seven years, Thant rejected the proposal. Acknowledging the agreement as a draft, he told Palamas and Olcay that ‘he would submit a different proposal’ as he ‘had in mind a five-party conference with participation of a UN representative instead of four-party talks’.\(^ {250}\)

Announcing this change to the interested parties in an official memo before waiting for rebuttal from Palamas and Olcay offered Thant a degree of power but, in the grander scheme of the conflict, the parties in the conflict no longer saw the UN as worth inviting to the negotiating table.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated how the Force’s short-term operations in Cyprus contributed to the stagnation of the conflict and facilitated the eruption of hostilities between the two communities as the Greek junta re-ignited military activities on the island. The Force’s limited

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\(^ {244}\) UNA, S-0079-0006-20, ‘Press Release CYP/492: Replies from Cyprus, Greece and Turkey to Secretary-General’s Appeal’, 3 December 1967.

\(^ {245}\) Ibid.


\(^ {250}\) Ibid.
remit stymied long-term planning on the ground as the UNFICYP mid-level staff attempted to operate amid local outbreaks of violence and external pressures to negotiate a solution within three (later extended to six) month mandate extensions.\textsuperscript{251} The Plaza crisis in 1965-1966 turned the parties of the conflict away from the UN as a diplomatic agent. Instead, the mainland countries sought political advice from each other or state actors from whom they could receive materiel assistance. With a dwindling budget and fewer troops on the ground, the Force’s involvement was always too tentative and limited to make a long-term contribution to the resolution of the conflict. The separation of inter-communal interactions and subsequent displacement crisis isolated and distorted the two communities, seemingly beyond the point of reconciliation.

Thus, the mission’s palliative military operations and limitations fed into the violence in 1967 as the paramilitary groups grew frustrated by political stagnation. As troops attempted to implement a ceasefire between the warring communities during 1967, the UN leadership and the contributing nations evaluated the benefits of this strategy if a political settlement was impossible. Despite recognition of the damage caused by keeping the mission on the ground, the UN leadership determined that the possibility of preventing further bloodshed was sufficient to extend the mission indefinitely. Thant retired as secretary-general in December 1971, concluding his premiership on a negative note. Having been side-lined and replaced by superpower representatives, the UNFICYP staff maintained their military mandate on the ground but became increasingly pessimistic about a political resolution to the Cyprus conflict, as talks were repeatedly delayed by the Turkish government.\textsuperscript{252}

Thus, the experience of UNFICYP and the political context of the Cyprus conflict forced the UN leadership to re-evaluate the efficacy of liberal internationalist interventions as inherently beneficial to international peacebuilding. During ONUC the mission leadership received criticism, but it was not the concept of peacekeeping that was targeted: rather it was the strategic ‘failure’ of the personnel involved. Peacekeeping itself remained viable; it was the UN’s ability to manage a peacekeeping mission that was in question. During UNFICYP, Thant carefully constructed the mandate and the staff on the ground had the benefit of the three previous missions to learn from, as well as the existing technical support of the SBA staff. The troops deescalated the conflict in 1964 and reduced the violence by implementing and maintaining the ceasefire along the Green Line. Other than the instances of peacekeepers smuggling arms and people mentioned above, the Force largely maintained law and order during

\textsuperscript{252} BNA, FCO 9/1501, ‘Relations between Cyprus and Turkey: letter from British Embassy in Ankara to Foreign Office’, 16\textsuperscript{th} May 1972.
1964-1967, providing the context for political resolution and even expanding its functions to react to the displacement crisis. However, the intervention and the ceasefire provided Cypriot leaders with a means of stagnating the conflict and hostilities between the communities. The political context of Cyprus undermined the UN dogma of peacekeeping as the future of conflict resolution and challenged its primacy in the organisation’s approach to protecting international peace and security.
Conclusion

The presence of armed forces, the presence of foreigners involved in dealing with problems within a country, if it is done by any country is intervention. If it is done by an international organization it is not intervention. It is a new concept of sovereignty that has to be taken into consideration with the existence of the international organizations.

– Galo Plaza, President of Ecuador and UN official

This thesis has asked how UN peacekeeping practices in post-colonial contexts intervened in and shaped ongoing processes of decolonisation. Its central concern has been to unearth the colonial continuities perpetuated throughout the four first armed UN peacekeeping missions and to unpack how these continuities influenced understandings amongst UN officials of the conflicts and the local population caught up in them. It has also revealed how peacekeeping practices reinforced nation-state hegemony as a geopolitical formation during a period in which ideas about sovereignty were being renegotiated by a range of older and emerging global powers. Rather than inviting a ‘moment of opportunity’ for populations trapped by imperial rule, decolonisation processes provoked complex territorial, political, and racial questions without precedent, troubling the UN Secretariat and peacekeeping staff on the ground. As Fred Cooper has argued, ‘The triumph of independence movements over colonial rule in Asia and Africa is another of those metanarratives that needs to be rethought’. The norms, hierarchies, and relationships established at the Bandung Conference in 1955 between Afro-Asian nations conflicted with the rights of internal or annexed populations. The Afro-Asian bloc’s efforts to defend the inviolability of a state’s internal affairs were as rooted in colonial memory as they were in post-colonial imperialist aspirations. As demonstrated in this thesis, vulnerable populations, non-elite classes, activist movements, and minority groups struggled to achieve self-determination which resulted in civil war, internal displacement, and re-colonisation. UN peacekeepers helped to entrench this uneven distribution of sovereignty in post-colonial contexts and legitimised hierarchies of power between stronger and weaker, larger and smaller, well-resourced and poorly-resourced nations through their own prejudices, ideological pursuits, and

diplomatic alignments. As Plaza notes, the innovation of peacekeeping missions in the UN organisational machinery remade sovereignty for the post-colonial international order; UN peacekeepers exploited the permissions afforded to the mission to violate the non-interventionist principle and paved the way for further international interference, especially from ex-colonial powers, and hierarchies of inequality in post-colonial host nations.

By bringing together histories of peacekeeping and decolonisation, this thesis has shed new light on the mechanisms through which sovereignty was negotiated and renegotiated from the mid-1950s onwards. It has challenged the state-actor focus of diplomatic and military narratives of UN operations and demonstrated how pivotal mid-level peacekeepers were in curating the norms and structures of the post-colonial international order, contrary to dominant scholarly focuses on New York- or Geneva-based internationalism. However, as Pierre-Yves Saunier suggested, rather than substituting ‘a history of the nation-state with a history without or against the nation-state’, this history has examined how political power flowed between national and international actors, regional and global networks, and headquarters- and field-based levels, thus, discovering a ‘way to study how nation-states and flows of all sorts are entangled components of the modern age’.6 This thesis has illuminated the patterns, continuities, and ruptures in peacekeeping operations and examined the variations in the political power of field-based personalities and mid-level bureaucrats throughout each mission. This thesis has also explored how the UN Secretariat and mission staff related to geopolitical pressures in a myriad of ways and with differing levels of influence; as perceptions of the UN shifted from UNEF to UNFICYP, especially for the US and Afro-Asian bloc, the UN leadership were less able to intervene in the direction of the conflict. From 1956-1971, the mid-level peacekeepers functioned as knowledge producers for the UN Secretariat staff, diplomats for regional and international belligerents, and international regulators for nationalist activists. They legitimised post-colonial territories and borders and intervened in the ideological alliances of the host state and were influenced by broader political concerns. Crucially, they helped to shape post-colonial sovereignty as a tool through which international actors attempted to maintain influence over post-colonial spaces during a period of Cold War anxiety and geopolitical transformation.

Deployed to disputed territories at this moment of geopolitical transformation, mid-level peacekeeping staff became central figures in wide-ranging debates about the collapse of European imperialism, the military threat of the Cold War, and the future of the nation-state system across the Global South. Their approach to peace operations were driven by personal

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views and political motivations, but also by escalating anxieties about the role that the UN should play in the world. They sought to reassure member-states that the organisation remained the gold-standard for conflict response, both at the diplomatic level and in the field. However, this international focus continually prioritised geopolitical anxieties, distracting UN staff from implementing long-term solutions to conflicts for the regional populations. Performing from a defensive position in the wake of the Congo criticism left the UN staff vulnerable to further attack but eager to prove their worth. Through further expansions, with the development of the first UN territorial administration and the creation of a dedicated UN mediator, Thant granted greater powers to the mid-level peacekeepers in post-Congo missions. However, this devolution enabled the development of technocratic and racialised organisational patterns in the field and compounded peacekeeper exceptionalism during a period of institutional pressure. Rather than focusing on local populations, mid-level diplomats fixated on providing a ‘win’ for the organisation which, ultimately, protracted conflicts and inter-communal tensions further. They attempted to repair the UN’s reputation through the pursuit of short-term stability in host territories, neglecting long-term issues, such as human rights, recolonization, or conflict stagnation.

By challenging claims that Cold War peacekeeping missions were impartial, simple, and apolitical, this thesis has revealed how mid-level peacekeepers interfered in post-colonial states’ political processes and negotiated the political interference of other nations, especially former or emergent colonisers. Decolonisation across the Global South ignited Western fears that formerly colonised populations would shift from European control to agents of Soviet aggression. Imperial proxies had allowed Washington and the UN Secretariat leadership to relax, to a degree, as these colonised Global South territories remained invulnerable to Soviet intervention. However, decolonisation altered global priorities and, throughout the 1950s, the UN Secretariat prioritised anti-Communist operations in Korea, and Washington funded British and French colonial administrations. The UN leadership, in particular secretaries-general Dag Hammarskjöld and U Thant, conceived Soviet interference as a threat to law and order, not only in the host country, but also to neighbouring populations. They installed an anti-Soviet approach to international security practices in the field, encouraging mid-level staff to implement anti-Communist policies and practices within the peacekeeping bureaucracy under a guise of peacebuilding. This ideological bias manifested, for instance, in peacekeepers’ efforts in Congo.

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9 Ibid., pp. 467-8.
to restrict international imports, control communications and transport, and align with anti-
Lumumba politicians in violation of the host country’s sovereignty. Although other scholarship
has examined the anti-Communist leanings of UN Secretariat staff, this is the first history to
explore the ideological leanings of mid-level bureaucrats, such as Šture Linnér, Galo Plaza, and
Djalal Abdoh, and to trace the practical manifestations of their political interference on the
ground.

This thesis has also situated peacekeeping missions as part of the longer historical
legacies of nineteenth-century interventionism and colonialism. UN leadership recruited mid-
level officials from a variety of past positions, from managing mining corporations to leading
anti-colonial debates within the General Assembly, but they were integrated within the UN
international civil service and, thus, driven by the same political preferences for liberal
internationalism and the nation-state system. Grounded in racist and technocratic
exceptionalism, mid-level peacekeeping personnel took inspiration, often instinctively, from
previous career experiences and imperial administrations to establish stability in their host
countries and assert military authority over the restive population. The peacekeeping staff were
gatekeepers to the global community and held substantial power over local populations’ political
futures by perpetuating hierarchies of inequality in the peacebuilding territory through
administrative staffing and racialised rhetoric. Thus, rather than confirming beliefs that post-
Cold War peacekeeping missions strayed from the original, principled standards of UN
operations,¹⁰ this thesis illustrates that past missions entrenched existing racialised structures of
unequal power dynamics, cultural hierarchies, and Western exceptionalism inherited from
colonial administrations and Western networks into peacekeeping contexts.¹¹

This conclusion reflects on an important question that emerges from this project: how
does bringing international organisations into histories of decolonisation and the Cold War
change how we conceive diplomatic power during this period? Traditional scholarly
examinations of diplomatic power have typically concentrated on inter-state negotiations,
conflicts, and personal alliances between governmental representatives and leaders, relying on
state documents and interviews.¹² Reflecting the dominant international relations paradigm,
diplomatic power during the Cold War and decolonisation has, traditionally, been conceived by

international historians as national. Power has been categorised through a figure’s proximity to an electoral mandate or authoritarian position, thus, providing them with mediatory or coercive power during international negotiations. For example, within Cold War diplomacy, the personal diplomacy between superpower leaders John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev to avert the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 has remained a crucial moment in international history. Similarly, when bureaucratic diplomacy is considered, examination has been often limited to governmental networks and involvement of state figures. Indeed, the diplomatic strength of the UN Security Council and General Assembly has been assumed to be predominantly through the presence of state representatives within the forums, rather than through the UN administrators, bureaucrats, and officials behind the scenes and in the field. Although this scholarship has unearthed significant diplomatic relationships and activities through the recently declassified Cold War and decolonisation documents, these works reinforce a restrictive conception of political diplomacy and diplomatic power that centres on those employed by or representative of a nation-state.

However, recent historians have begun to challenge this narrow conception of political diplomacy during decolonisation. They have posited the impact of international civil servants and non-state actors in navigating and shaping international diplomacy during the twentieth century and diversified conceptions of ‘diplomatic’ power during this period. Scholars have revealed U Thant’s important role during the Cuban Missile Crisis, for instance, benefitting from

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21. Cultural diplomacy, or soft power, during the twentieth century has also been an increasingly popular area of study as institutes, such as the British Council, built transnational connections through music, art, sport, religion, and theatre. For more, see Hadjiathanasiou, ‘Colonial Rule, Cultural Relations and the British Council in Cyprus; N. Prevots, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2012).
the opening of Cold War archives to the public, transforming the traditional superpower narrative, and nuancing understandings of diplomatic power within the international sphere. Non-state actors, particularly UN secretaries-general, have been increasingly acknowledged for their diplomacy and mediation during the Cold War and decolonisation, with scholars drawing attention to the shift towards global governance following the Second World War. Whilst retaining a focus on ‘great men’, such as Hammarskjöld, works on non-state spaces and networks have also helped to illuminate the contributions of women to major diplomatic developments of the twentieth century. This thesis has examined the diplomatic activities and influence of mid-level international staff and those deployed to the field to reveal the internal decision-making and practices concealed with the UN bureaucracy. It has charted the organisation’s operational innovations and experiments during decolonisation and argued that many were developed by mid-level staff rather than by the UN leadership in New York, such as the impulsive decision of Linnér to co-opt ANC trucks for the ONUC mission, or Cordier’s decision to close the Leopoldville airports and radio stations. Events in Congo provoked the UAR to withdraw their troops and prompted protests from Afro-Asian representatives, paving the way for further outrage following the murder of Lumumba only months later. Rather than passive intermediaries, mid-level peacekeepers sought to cut through red tape and exploit their power to shape the political future of the host territory and the post-colonial international order. Additionally, each chapter has also reflected on the statebuilding impulse within UN peacekeeping staff towards performative and identity-building practices, such as stamps, newsletters, flags, and military ceremonies, whilst on the ground. Mid-level UN officials used their access to belligerents and political activists to negotiate political and governance structures, such as national unity, a non-aligned ideology, and democratic processes, that benefitted the organisation’s nation-state system, in exchange for support and legitimacy from the UN officials. Thus, as peacekeepers experimented with non-state diplomacy in the field and bargained with the warring parties, they reinforced a post-

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22 Dorn and Pauk, ‘Unsung Mediator: U Thant and the Cuban Missile Crisis’.
23 Scholarly attention is particularly drawn to the UN figures who won Nobel Peace Prizes, Dag Hammarskjöld and Ralph Bunche.
24 Lipsey, Hammarskjöld.
colonial world vision with the UN at the centre of state regulation and the international security paradigm.

In sum, this thesis shows that peacekeeping missions and staff were integral to the reshaping and remaking of the international community during and following decolonisation during the 1950s and 1960s. Uniquely placed and protected within the conflict context, UN officials should be better recognised in decolonisation historiography for their contribution and interventions, particularly in the literature of twentieth century sovereignty. Rather than being peripheral to spaces of diplomatic innovation, field-based decision-making, interactions, and politics entrenched the norms and standards of the nation-state system that remain hegemonic today during a period of geopolitical fragility and anxiety. As current secretary-general, António Guterres, noted in 2018, ‘A peacekeeping operation is not an army, or a counter-terrorist force, or a humanitarian agency. It is a tool to create the space for a nationally-owned political solution’. Decolonisation was not a discrete process with a predictable outcome; UN peacekeepers played an integral role in translating liberal internationalism onto post-colonial territorial disputes as a peacebuilding policy whilst characterising alternative global or national visions as threats to international security. Across the Global South, UN peacekeepers reshaped sovereignty and recast international interventionism as a post-colonial function, perpetuating hierarchies of race, expertise, and diplomatic power into newly independent nations.

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