Looking for a Few Good Cops:
Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and CIVPOL

CHUCK CALL and MICHAEL BARNETT

The international community is looking for a few good cops. As peacekeeping operations give way to peacebuilding and comprehensive security, the international community is increasingly discovering that soldiers such as the UN ‘blue helmets’ are ill-equipped to do a police officer’s job. Paralleling the meteoric role of peacekeeping operations in monitoring internal instability is the increased prominence of CIVPOL forces. Numbering only 35 in 1988, CIVPOL increased a hundred-fold within four years and have been deployed in a dozen countries: 1,500 CIVPOL served in Namibia, 3,600 in Cambodia, 900 in Haiti, and 1,800 in Bosnia. At present there are roughly 4,360 CIVPOL deployed around the world, including some 1,900 in Bosnia.

More impressive than CIVPOL’s expanded numbers are their growing responsibilities. At the heart of most of their activities is the monitoring of local police forces and overseeing public security. But public security is an expansive concept, especially in the turbulence that follows armed conflict, and so civilian police find themselves asked to undertake an impressive array of peacekeeping duties. These duties may include overseeing the security and human rights of returned refugees and displaced persons; encouraging a neutral political environment free from intimidation during the electoral process; monitoring the cantonment, regroupment, disarmament and demobilization of former armed combatants; acting as a liaison between factions, non-governmental organizations and UN agencies; and assisting in humanitarian activities. While military personnel are quite good at separating and monitoring two combatants and helping in the process of demilitarization, they are generally ill-suited, and often reluctant, to perform a host of other tasks that concern public order. There is no substitute for civilian police in such matters.

CIVPOL are being asked not only to perform these myriad peacekeeping tasks, but also to help build institutions that might prevent future conflict – ‘peacebuilding’ tasks, in the words of former Secretary-General Boutros

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Boutros-Ghali. The most salient of these is leaving behind a professional, humane civilian police force that can help eliminate the root causes of armed conflict and become an agent of the rule of law and democratization. From Gaza to El Salvador, from Mozambique to Rwanda to Bosnia, the transition from civil war to civil society is inextricably linked to the development of civilian, apolitical police forces that are composed of different political contingents and ethnic groups, and who will protect citizens, uphold the rule of law and help to maintain order with a minimum of force. The ability of these forces to be both representative and effective in combating common crime will be a key factor in whether peace and, in many cases, democracy can be consolidated. And if military troops are not well suited to the public-security tasks of peacekeeping, then they are particularly inappropriate for building permanent civilian police forces.

Consequently, the international community is increasingly looking for a few good cops – and not always finding them. This article reviews the increasing prominence and importance of international civilian police in issues of public order, internal security and the democratization process. We begin by placing the international community’s concern in historical context, emphasizing that security forces have traditionally been a principal source of the problem rather than a possible solution. We then turn to the increased demand for international civilian police, drawing a distinction between civilian police that are expected to monitor public order during a peacekeeping operation and those that are expected to create a reformed, professional police force. While there has been increased demand for both inputs, the UN is not organized to meet these demands effectively. Although UN civilian police forces have performed admirably in countless instances and in difficult circumstances, unfortunately they have stumbled in their ability to perform their appointed duties in a timely and effective manner. We review these obstacles to implementation, and then propose some modest institutional reforms as a corrective. We conclude by suggesting that new international police-monitoring and institution-building mechanisms might create their own demand for reformed police structures, and by stressing the need for greater attention to matters of public security in peacebuilding.

**International Politics and Internal Security**

Since the end of the Cold War, the international community has evinced greater concern for internal security. There are various reasons for this, but chief among them are the generalized belief that there is a relationship between domestic security and international security, and the observation that an increasing percentage of today’s conflicts are domestic in origin but
regional in consequence. In many respects this renewed interest by the international community in internal security represents a throwback to the colonial days, though with an important twist: during colonial times the emphasis was on internal security as defined by the regime in power, and on the creation of a security apparatus that could meet this demand. And because the regime in power was often a non-democratic one representing a small segment of elites rather than the population at large, the international system tended to reinforce the security of the regime rather than that of society.\textsuperscript{1} Since the end of the Cold War, however, the international community has begun to reverse this relationship, showing greater interest in reforming the public security apparatuses in many formerly non-democratic states in order to make them a source of security for society, both individually and collectively, rather than for the state.

Third World states have historically focused on internal as opposed to external security threats.\textsuperscript{2} The particularities of colonialism and the state-formation process it engendered help explain this concern with internal security and the commensurate development of Third World police forces which were not servants of society. Colonial military power focused upon internal rather than external threats to the regime. Because significant political and military resources were not usually available from the colonial centre, and mass mobilization was not a viable strategy when society represented the principal threat, regimes tended to militarize coopted groups or ethnic minorities.\textsuperscript{3} In such circumstances there was no significant distinction between the military and the police, for both were principally directed against and concerned with domestic threats to regime security.\textsuperscript{4} In many instances the security apparatus was established by colonial powers and Great Power patrons. Spain, Portugal and France left behind paramilitary or military police forces in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Seeking to promote stability in the Caribbean Basin in the early twentieth century, the US Marines created constabulary forces in Panama, Nicaragua and Haiti, all of which would become vehicles for repressive dictatorial rule in subsequent decades. By the first decades of this century a general pattern had emerged in which the military was functionally little different from the police and in which public security systems were instruments of the regime in power, which directed them against internal rather than less serious external threats.

The end of colonialism, the emergence of juridical sovereignty, and the Cold War did little to change this basic pattern. Principal threats to the security of Third World states continued to derive from within, and their regimes continued to organize their security forces to preserve power and confront internal threats. Institutional interests and inertia gave Third World regimes little incentive to reform their security systems and every incentive
to carry forward colonial practices into the post-colonial period. Three features of the international system also contributed to the status quo. First, the emergence of juridical sovereignty meant that internal security was now normatively sequestered from the international community, and Third World states did their best to reject any insinuation of Great Power intervention as a breach of their sovereignty. Second, the prevailing assumption that international order depended upon balances of power served to buttress juridical sovereignty, further closing off consideration of the domestic. This emphasis on juridical sovereignty and balances of power reinforced principles of territorial inviolability and the sanctity of domestic affairs, intensifying an international normative and strategic imperative to distinguish between internal and external security. Consequently, Third World states enjoyed greater autonomy to focus upon domestic threats to their regimes, as the international system constrained the scope for interference in domestic affairs of other states.

Third, Cold War politics encouraged western patrons to equate public order with regime stability. In fact, they generally proved more willing to help clients confront threats to public order without seeking to convert public security systems from instruments of regime protection into instruments of social protection and service. On those occasions when Great Powers did intervene in domestic politics, this was justified in terms of international security threats – hot wars or the Cold War – and generally deepened this prior pattern. For instance, the most significant post-colonial effort to aid civilian police forces in developing countries was undertaken by the United States during the Cold War. In 1962 President Kennedy initiated a massive civilian police training and advising programme, including an International Police Academy located in Washington, DC, administered by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Recipient regimes proceeded to use the programme to improve their surveillance and persecution of political enemies, at times with the encouragement of anti-Communist US advisers. The US Congress eliminated the programme in 1975 when it was shown to be linked to torture in Latin America and Vietnam.

UN peacekeeping operations reflected the times of the Cold War and the thinking of the politics of territorial restraint and juridical sovereignty. The novelty of ‘first-generation’ peacekeeping operations lay in the deployment of UN personnel as impartial referees and physical barriers between the armed parties to a dispute, and the vast majority of peacekeeping operations prior to 1989 concerned cross-border conflicts rather than internal conflicts. In such contexts there was little need for civilian police. During these early peacekeeping operations, UN military troops assumed what minimal police duties existed, including riot control and other civil
functions. Only three peacekeeping operations prior to 1989 contained UN civilian police units, all dating from the early 1960s. The United Nations Operation in the Congo (1960–64) drew on Ghanaian and Nigerian police for a few months, and the Cyprus operation (1964–present) included a 175-person civilian police unit which was the first to operate under the current term ‘UN CIVPOL’ but which dwindled to 35 by the late 1970s. By and large, however, because most operations pertained to monitoring the militaries of opposing states, blue-helmeted soldiers rather than CIVPOL populated most peacekeeping operations.

In general, the institutional legacy of colonialism carried over into the post-colonial period as there continued to be a blurred distinction between the military and the police: both were instruments of the regime in power, and both were used principally against internal societal threats. Moreover, the international community paid scant attention to the reform of the security apparatus because of the normative shield of juridical sovereignty and the Cold War. Finally, because most UN operations pertained to interstate rather than domestic conflicts, they rarely contained a civilian police unit and hardly ever delved into structures of domestic governance.

The End of the Cold War, ‘Second-Generation’ Peacekeeping, and Police

The end of the Cold War transformed this situation in three respects. First, a renewed interest in the domestic bases of international security emerged, due partly to the prevalence of internal armed conflicts and the West’s increased interest in rescuing ‘failed states’. The growing recognition that internal conflicts have far-reaching consequences for international security has shifted the thinking of policymakers from the balance-of-power politics that once preoccupied them to the construction of institutions and democratic systems which might provide a firmer foundation for comprehensive security. Whereas once domestic politics were eclipsed by the Cold War premium on juridical sovereignty, now it is precisely domestic configurations and regime types that policymakers look to as the bases of peace. In short, a community of democratic states is seen as the key to peace.

Second, western policymakers have come to view the public security apparatus as critical to domestic and regional stability, as well as to deeper democratization. Many of the better-known post-Cold War commissions on the future of global governance have stressed the importance of enhancing the rule of law and its institutions as a matter of domestic and global governance, providing at least rhetorical evidence that the strong sovereignty norms that once precluded international actors from becoming heavily involved in a country’s internal policing have weakened. This is
true not only of those states that are ‘transiting’ from war to peace, but also of other countries which have moved from authoritarianism to some form of democracy. Moreover, as the interstate system and the world economy have become increasingly globalized, western interests in internal order, stable workforce conditions, the rule of law and global crime control have been independently voiced by many Third World governments.

Consistent with this changing orientation since the end of the Cold War is an important, but generally neglected, change in bilateral and regionally-organized police assistance programmes. Many countries have demonstrated an increased willingness to provide bilateral police aid. Various factors drive this development, including heightened demand from countries undergoing conflict resolution or democratization, a renewed interest among suppliers who see reformed civilian police as an instrument for both fostering the rule of law and confronting evolving international security threats, and an overstretched United Nations.

Exemplary here are US police assistance programmes. In 1986 the US Congress authorized a new Department of Justice police aid programme as part of various exceptions to its 1975 ban on police assistance. Run entirely by civilians (mostly FBI agents initially), the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) originally focused on improving the investigative skills of Latin American police forces. Since 1990, ICITAP has played a wider and still-growing role in designing the curricula of new police academies with an emphasis on human rights, and structuring and advising reconstituted police forces. ICITAP took the lead in developing a new Panamanian police force after the US invasion in 1989, for example, and it helped, in cooperation with the United Nations, to build police forces in Haiti, El Salvador, Somalia and Bosnia. Canada, France, Great Britain and Spain have also become more involved in bilateral police advising and assistance from the 1980s.

In the mid-1990s, this new-found bilateral willingness to provide police assistance extended to regional organizations as well. In conjunction with the expanding role of regional organizations in peacekeeping more broadly, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) assumed responsibility for police development programmes in the Eastern Slavonian region of Croatia and in Kosovo. The Western European Union (WEU) did the same in Albania.

International financial institutions have indicated a new interest in providing police institutional support in efforts to bolster the rule of law for commerce and to prevent and reduce violence; the Inter-American Bank approved its first two loans for police assistance in 1998.

The end of the Cold War introduced a major change in the types of conflicts that international peacekeepers were enlisted to confront. Most
peacekeeping operations since 1988 concern not the monitoring of borders, but rather the politics within borders. Whereas once peacekeepers were situated solely between combatants that had agreed to a ceasefire, and rarely if ever engaged in offensive action, these ‘second-generation’ operations are involved in a myriad of activities associated with nation-building and peace enforcement.17 Reflecting this change, there has been a marked expansion of the presence and responsibilities for civilian police. During the 1989 Namibia operation, 1,500 CIVPOLs undertook a wide range of tasks, including monitoring elections and screening and monitoring local police.18 In El Salvador, CIVPOL monitored human rights abuses and helped recruit, screen and train a completely new police force. In Angola, CIVPOL monitored the demobilization of UNITA forces and the disarmament of civilians.19 In Haiti, CIVPOL helped to design and train a new civilian police force as part of the first UN operation which explicitly included police development in its mandate. In Cambodia, they not only provided public security as part of the unusual UN assumption of some state functions, but even arrested suspects for charges brought by a special UN Prosecutor.20 In Eastern Slavonia and Bosnia, CIVPOL monitored agreements to integrate ethnic minorities into the police. The increased use of civilian police is a direct reflection of the changing definition of security and direction of peacekeeping operations. By the mid-1990s, peacekeeping operations were often succeeded by missions focused exclusively upon police institution-building, such as the UN Civilian Police Mission in Haiti and the UN Police Support Group in Eastern Slavonia.

In the face of such tremendous demands and expectations, there is a resoundingly inadequate supply of well-trained and available civilian police – with a partial consequence that military forces are being used to perform police tasks. Military forces have been called upon to oversee a host of activities that are arguably better handled by police: the security and human rights of returned refugees and displaced persons; the encouragement of a neutral political environment free from intimidation during the electoral process; the monitoring, cantonment, regroupment, disarmament and demobilization of police and security forces; acting as liaison between factions, non-governmental organizations and UN agencies; and assisting in humanitarian activities. These are not activities for which militaries have generally been trained, even in an era of greater military preparation for complex peace operations. Military troops and CIVPOL are trained for different tasks; we generally do not ask the police to perform a soldier’s job, and we should not be asking soldiers to perform the police’s job.

Having noted the increased demand for international civilian police and the heightened interest in providing assistance for reconstituted police
forces abroad, we now turn to the ability of the international community to respond effectively and promptly.

**Peacekeeping and Policing**

While there have been important and impressive developments in the international community's ability to address these new demands regarding public security, neither the UN nor regional organizations nor individual member-states are able to respond effectively to new challenges to public security related to peace and security. We differentiate between two tasks—peacekeeping and peacebuilding—in order to better understand the problems currently confronting the effectiveness of civilian police and to derive some more promising solutions.

Peacekeeping involves two distinct security challenges: that of ensuring the security of the parties to armed conflict, and that of ensuring the security of the remainder of the population, or 'public security'. Peacekeeping has classically concerned the security of the parties, by providing third-party guarantors of the physical security of distrustful former enemies. This role has fallen to international military troops, who have the necessary capabilities to respond or, more often, to deter any battles, skirmishes or attacks by guerrilla or government armies, and, more prominently, to monitor ceasefire lines. The end of the Cold War and dozens of peacekeeping experiences over the past decade have led to a healthy debate over how to strengthen and reform peacekeeping, even as political support in some quarters has been waning. Prominent among these proposals have been calls for a permanent UN army, standby military forces, a reconsideration of command-and-control and a 'lessons learned' unit. Some of these proposals have met with well-founded reservations about authority, command and circumstances of deployment, while others have been adopted for the betterment of peacekeeping. Relatively absent from such discussions has been any mention of the role of international civilian police monitors and trainers, and how to strengthen their unique abilities to reinforce other peacekeeping elements.

We believe that a more fruitful place for rethinking international peacekeeping capabilities lies in bolstering as well as restructuring international police capabilities to contribute to peacekeeping needs. Police are, of course, better able to address the security of the general population as a post-conflict peacekeeping operation begins, filling the 'public security gap' that parallels and continues after peacekeeping operations. If CIVPOL are to fulfill their critical roles and mandates effectively, then three major deficiencies will have to be redressed.

First, police are generally harder to locate than are military troops, because the former have constant peacetime duties and thus cannot be
spared quickly and for periods of several months. This is particularly true in countries like the United States and Great Britain which have no national police force and must call upon officers from small, resource-scarce local police forces. For instance, the USA desired to place US police officers in ONUMOZ but confronted a logistical nightmare in trying to get approval from local US police forces. Police are also more expensive than soldiers. While the five-member UN Civilian Police Unit in charge of recruitment in New York has managed to fill the CIVPOL quota for most operations, it has had a hard time of it, often having to settle for what one UN official called ‘second and third-tier choices’.22

Second, many CIVPOL arrive at a peacekeeping mission totally unqualified for their international duties. Even where personnel are perfectly adequate police in their countries of origin, they often fail to meet multiple requirements for the mission. So if the good news is that the UN has been able to field the assessed CIVPOL quota roughly on time, the bad news is that quality has often been sacrificed. Much of the responsibility for the shortcomings of national police lies with member-states who neglect prescribed standards and fail to send the right stuff. Even the common, basic requirements of being able to drive a vehicle and to speak the language of the mission are not consistently met. At a 1995 conference which brought together the heads of CIVPOL units from around the world, the most common complaint from commissioners concerned the numerous delegations of CIVPOL who could not drive, or could not speak the language.23 In Mozambique over half of the 1,000 CIVPOL could not drive. In another operation, a donating country simply issued drivers’ licenses (all of which bore the same date) to its CIVPOL members as they were departing for the operation. While the general perception is that these problems reside only with non-western countries, this is not the case. Many police from Canada and France serving in Haiti viewed their job more as a vacation than a vocation. One US official rated the American police contingent of the US-led multinational force in Haiti as ‘near the bottom of quality’, and other US officials referred derisively to them as ‘unemployed mall guards’.24

Third, CIVPOL sometimes contribute to the very lawlessness they are supposed to control. The human rights division of UNTAC received numerous complaints of human rights violations, including rape, committed not by Cambodians but by CIVPOL. Some Bulgarian police serving in Cambodia were notorious for frequenting brothels, as well as for attempting to smuggle out exotic snakes. In the El Salvador operation (ONUSAL), a Mexican CIVPOL was kicked out of the country for trafficking in drugs. In general, while most CIVPOL are of high quality and have performed their duties admirably, problems persist in getting quality police at the right time.
Reorganizing Police Support for Peacekeeping?

The United Nations and its member-states enjoy various options to strengthen the police capabilities of peacekeeping operations, of which we focus upon three. First, a series of modest institutional reforms can be implemented. The UN has begun to make some of these changes. In 1996 it established ‘Selection Assistance Teams’ to travel to contributing countries and help ensure that CIVPOL candidates meet all mission requirements. Consequently, language and driving skills were much improved among CIVPOL in Bosnia, especially after the first year.25 The UN is increasingly supporting on-site commanders who seek to repatriate problematic CIVPOL officers, and it has used regional specialists to conduct pre-deployment training on the culture and language of the place of deployment, placing soldiers and police side by side so as to begin a process of communication and coordination.26 Human rights training for CIVPOL has been incorporated as well. In 1997, the Commissioner of the International Police Task Force in Bosnia established an open, competitive promotions system within the mission, based on job announcements and merit-based selection.

But more changes and resources are needed. Most immediately, the current Civilian Policing Unit in the Planning Division of the Secretariat needs to be expanded. At present this five-person unit is unable to perform adequately the numerous tasks and demands placed on its shoulders. In addition, a more formalized and professionalized vetting procedure is warranted – a procedure which could also include a database of police officers with particular specialities or those that have served with distinction in past operations and thus might be particularly valuable for future ones. Regional peacekeeping training centres could also pay greater attention to the needs and requirements of civilian police in order to standardize procedures and increase inter-operability. Member-states also need to find ways to make their best police professionals more available for international service. For instance, Bangladesh restricts its police to one year of service in CIVPOL, unnecessarily forcing turnover in its contingent. Some states have inaugurated pre-deployment training for CIVPOL candidates on their own.

A second, more ambitious possibility is the formation of a standby or a standing international CIVPOL force of a few hundred individuals with diverse language skills, able to deploy quickly to monitor local police forces or even to provide public security with military backup support. Some countries have already set aside standby police forces for such a purpose. However, these forces number only about 100, and they have not necessarily been selected on the basis of language skills or prior experience.
Expanding this force would relieve military troops of public-order tasks, as well as providing public security more effectively than troops could to societies undergoing the war-to-peace transition. A less ambitious version could contain a core group of experienced monitors who would be supplemented for each mission by other national CIVPOL delegations. Such a force could not only help fill the public security gap in the immediate aftermath of a ceasefire, but would make two additional contributions: (a) decrease the need for military deployments which customarily generate more domestic political concerns because soldiers do not individually consent to peacekeeping duty, and (b) cultivate a cadre of experienced police monitors who can capitalize on prior experience rather than 'reinvent the wheel' with each peacekeeping operation. Deploying unarmed CIVPOL, rather than military troops, in less secure sites runs the risk of attracting politically motivated or criminal attacks, and such scenarios should be avoided. Like other lightly armed or unarmed UN personnel, civilian police are vulnerable to hostile action, raising the possibility that CIVPOL would not supplant peacekeeping soldiers at all, but simply make peace operations more complicated and risky.

A third option for international reorganization might remedy this scenario: the inclusion of a gendarmerie component alongside any military peacekeeping force, separate from any CIVPOL forces. Gendarmerie-type police, such as Italy's Carabinieri, Spain's Guardia Civil and France's Gendarmerie, differ from 'civilian police' (although they can be commanded by a civilian) in that they are trained not only in policing but also in military tactics and can deploy as units rather than individually. Gendarmerie-type forces, such as the Multilateral Special Units (MSU) in Bosnia and Kosovo, could respond to public-order crises among the civilian population more deftly than their military counterparts, without running the same security risks as CIVPOL. Such a force would require reinforcement by international military troops who could respond to any outbreak of conflict between demobilizing armies. Moreover, the global supply of gendarmes is limited to what a handful of countries with gendarmerie forces could offer. No matter how robust, an international gendarmerie monitoring and quick-reaction force should never wholly substitute for military capabilities where security threats remain. Policymakers must simply take care, as they should now, to ensure that the circumstances in which UN personnel are deployed are as safe as possible.27

While improvements in CIVPOL recruitment are crucial, serious thought should also be given to the formation of a standby or standing CIVPOL capability, and to a standby gendarmerie potential. The Secretary-General's recent proposals for reorganization have unfortunately not addressed such possibilities. In general, movement towards a more effective
dispatch and use of CIVPOL would contribute to the long-term likelihood of the success of operations. Moving in these directions will not only increase the quality and quantity of civilian police available for peacekeeping operation but also relieve pressures to utilize military troops for policing duties; and because member-states often hesitate to commit troops for a variety of reasons, the availability of police officers might serve to make states more responsive to UN Secretariat requests for peacekeeping duty. In any event, there can be no substitute for police who are more accustomed to immediate and direct contact with the population, and have more experience acting as intermediaries when conflict situations show signs of turning violent.

Peacebuilding and Policing

While the international community has begun to devote some attention to the problems of CIVPOL in its peacekeeping capacity, its limitations in the area of peacebuilding are less recognized – and more serious. In the area of policing, ‘peacekeeping’ and ‘peacebuilding’ require different mandates, people and organization. The policing needs of peacekeeping, as described above, are generally short-term, requiring quality police who can deploy rapidly to monitor public security in a transitional setting, performing other short-term duties as required. Peacekeeping is oriented principally towards filling security gaps during the initial stage of a peace operation, in cases where no agreed-upon authority or security force is able to provide order for the general population, and during the transitional stage before security and judicial arrangements acceptable to all sides in the conflict are fully operational.

Peacebuilding in the public security arena, on the other hand, entails a mandate that includes training or restructuring local police forces, with the support of local government or other power structures. It requires a multiyear effort and international police who are not only good cops, but who are also experts in building institutions: police with experience in teaching, in setting up police academies, in organizing and restructuring police organizations (i.e. expert managerial consultants) and in erecting especially committed to systems and structures such as ‘community-oriented’ policing which will serve citizens rather than narrowly-based regimes. These different roles and requirements for filling the ‘institutional’ security gap are outlined in Table 1, which includes institution-building needs for judicial and penal organizations as well.

To draw an analogy with the field of economic development, the requirements of assisting countries to formulate and implement long-term economic development plans are different from the requirements of providing
### TABLE 1
INTERNATIONAL TASKS AND RESOURCES REQUIRED TO FILL DIFFERENT PUBLIC SECURITY GAPS DURING PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEBUILDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Security Gaps:</th>
<th>Peacekeeping</th>
<th>Transitional</th>
<th>Peacebuilding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAIN TASKS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:</strong></td>
<td>• Establish &amp; maintain order</td>
<td>• Monitor interim security forces</td>
<td>• Develop indigenous institutions (Police, Judicial, Penal)</td>
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<td><strong>PERSONNEL REQUIRED:</strong></td>
<td>• Military forces</td>
<td>• Military forces</td>
<td>• Smaller military back-up and gendarme-type police</td>
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<td>• Gendarme-type police</td>
<td>• Gendarme-type police</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Int'l Civilian Police (e.g. CIVPOL)</td>
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<td>• Experts in Police Development (e.g. ICTAP, UNDP, possible JDU)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Oversight of judicial and penal personnel (e.g. Truth Commissions ICRC, NGOs, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Experts in development of judicial &amp; penal system (e.g. UNDP, CIDA, USAID, other bilateral programs, possible JDU)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SKILLS REQUIRED:</strong></td>
<td>• Sufficient force capabilities</td>
<td>• Policing experience</td>
<td>FOR POLICE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Riot control</td>
<td>• Knowledge of basic human rights</td>
<td>• Senior police managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Patrol</td>
<td>• Language skills</td>
<td>• Experience in establishing police academies, drafting curriculum</td>
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<td>• Driving skills</td>
<td>• Experience in establishing specialized operational and oversight units</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Field-Training Supervisors</td>
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<td>• Civilian human rights experts</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Civilian experts in broader crime prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOR JUDICIARY</td>
<td>• Experienced judges, prosecutors, public defenders</td>
<td>• Human rights experts</td>
<td>FOR JUDICIARY</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Human rights experts</td>
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<td>• Court administrators</td>
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<td>• Senior judges</td>
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<td>• Senior prosecutors</td>
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<td>• Experience in establishing judicial schools</td>
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<td>FOR PENAL SYSTEM</td>
<td>• Experienced prison guards</td>
<td>• Human rights experts on prison conditions</td>
<td>FOR PENAL SYSTEM</td>
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<td>• Experience in establishing Departments of Correction</td>
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<td>• Experience in supervising prison security systems</td>
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<td>• NGO educators in human rights</td>
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emergency relief in a crisis situation. Relief workers are recruited to meet a specific short-term need, and little expertise in institution-building or sustainable development strategies is required. But economic development experts have long recognized that providing emergency relief is only a ‘band-aid’, a quick fix – and that addressing long-term needs requires a focus on institutions and greater expertise in planning and management. The lesson for the public security sector, of course, is that developing a police force is different from monitoring one, and requires different organization and personnel. At present, however, CIVPOL make a contribution that is akin to that of relief workers, and the UN has no mechanism dedicated entirely to police development. Designed for monitoring public security in an emergency situation, CIVPOL selection and deployment almost entirely conforms to peacekeeping rather than peacebuilding tasks. The UN Civilian Police Handbook, for example, states that ‘The principal function of the United Nations Civilian Police is to monitor the local police decided by the Security Council in the adopted resolution for the mission.’

This 150-page manual contains fewer than three pages on ‘training,’ and devotes no attention to designing, reorganizing or building local police forces.

There are four principal ways in which CIVPOL as an institution is now inadequate for building police institutions. First, its method of recruitment of personnel is inappropriate. If it is difficult to get quality monitors who can drive vehicles and can speak the right language, the UN has only recently even begun to attempt to recruit CIVPOL for their ability to teach or to advise on police reorganization. Unable to request particular specialists from contributing countries, CIVPOL commanders generally have to meet their needs on the basis of what the next planeload brings. Bilateral police aid programmes or other UN agencies have often proven better at providing specialists not only in the overall design and deployment of a police force, but in discrete areas such as the drafting of police laws, curriculum development, selection procedures, the restructuring of criminal investigations and other specialized units, or the creation of internal control mechanisms. And they have proven better at incorporating police with experience in the ‘community-oriented’ type of policing so appropriate for efforts to foster societal security.

Second, CIVPOL suffer from a limited timeframe and a lack of continuity of personnel and learning across missions. CIVPOL are tied to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and its short-term peacekeeping operations, which often extend only two or three years. Building an institution requires at least several years, and CIVPOL as presently configured are usually not on the ground long enough to do the job. The current political climate and budget constraints facing the United Nations have only increased pressure to reduce the length of peacekeeping
operations even further. Although pre-deployment training prepared CIVPOL in Bosnia for their service in a shorter time-frame, the rapid turnover has generally meant that new CIVPOL personnel spend up to half their stay just getting familiar with the country and environment. Since each peacekeeping operation is a process largely autonomous from its predecessors – with new countries contributing military and police personnel under a mission-specific mandate – few CIVPOL are able to carry their experience and learning from one mission to the next. Dealing with counterparts in institution-building entails even more political challenges than normal CIVPOL monitoring duties, which makes prior experience that much more valuable.

Perhaps the most visible evidence of the time and organizational constraints on CIVPOL’s peacebuilding efforts is the haphazardness of its police training, including both direct training and ‘training the trainers’. CIVPOL field instruction is generally delivered in an ad hoc way based on CIVPOL officers’ own experience back home, and rarely based on the curriculum taught in the local academy or on a single unified curriculum reached in agreement with the host government. US officials have complained that CIVPOL in Haiti have not provided the ‘mentoring’ that fresh police recruits require in the field. Instead they have concentrated on either offering classes in the posts where they are stationed or offering routine visits to check on remote posts. Since over twenty countries could be contributing to any given operation, the divergences are numerous.

Third, many programmes that are designed to create a new civilian police force fail to take into account the necessity of altering the political and institutional environment in which the police operate. Training that simply transfers skills outside of a context of changing organizational or political culture merely creates new knowledge while holding constant the environment that inhibits those practices. According to the head of ICITAP, this is a key lesson of US police assistance: ‘Early on we were more training and skills oriented....But now we can’t see doing training in the absence of an institutional development framework.’ The UN’s lack of an instrument for institutional development, and the fact that its personnel usually serve only short tours of duty, means that new CIVPOL officers, excited at the prospect of contributing to the skills of local forces through on-the-job training, often fail to recognize the limits of training that is not accompanied by a modified doctrine and curriculum, by a reorganized force, by a purge of undesirable personnel, by new personnel, and by strengthened (or new) mechanisms of accountability and transparency. Attention must be paid to the organizational culture of the police.

Moreover, police institutions do not operate in a vacuum: they are part of, and are bound up with, the broader governance structures of the state.
Any effort to create a more apolitical and humane police force will depend on whether other features of society – including political parties, elections, the judiciary, and the like – are subjected to similar changes. This is a tall order. Consider the case of Cambodia. Although all four major armed factions received police training from UNTAC's CIVPOL unit, the government continued to dominate the force, and no major changes to organizational culture were included in either the peace accords or in the UN operation. Consequently, CIVPOLs work in Cambodia suffered from the same problems as those that beset old-style US police assistance programmes in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the UN's commitment to create a democratic police force that would respect human rights, and despite hundreds of hours of training at the hands of over 3,000 CIVPOL members, Cambodia's police force continues to commit human rights violations without accountability, and has not gained the confidence of the population. Judicial development remains a difficult and neglected aspect of post-conflict institution-building.

Fourth, as an instrument of a UN peacekeeping operation, CIVPOL suffers from the same political limitations that the United Nations faces. Institution-building requires a high degree of political will among the parties involved. The reform of organizational cultures and structures, even when agreed upon among former enemy factions, will inevitably encounter inertia or resistance from one party or another. Thus, if assistance is not to end up supporting abusive or unrepresentative police forces, third parties must exercise diplomatic or financial leverage. Yet the fact that the United Nations is made up of numerous states makes it less able than bilateral donors to use its presence and programmes for leverage with national governments or disarmed groups. For instance, during the peacekeeping operation in El Salvador, there were numerous attempts by the government and the guerrillas to undermine the apolitical, civilian character of a new police which the two parties had agreed to form as part of the settlement of their civil war. Even though UN officials were generally quicker than bilateral donors to denounce such attempts as violating the peace accords, bilateral donors often proved more adept than the UN mission in pressuring the government to reverse actions by the parties which would have otherwise left the international community training police who were linked to abusive and possibly corrupt practices.

The Bosnia Experience To Date
The United Nations Mission in Bosnia (UNMIBH) illustrates how the UN has most recently and most effectively tried to overcome the four limitations on CIVPOL's institution-building role described above. After a first phase emphasizing its monitoring role of the conduct and reduction of police
forces within both entities of Bosnia (the Bosniak/Croat-controlled Federation and the Serb-controlled Republika Srpska), the International Police Task Force (IPTF, composed of CIVPOL plus a handful of civilian specialists) entered a second phase which focused explicitly on institutional development of the police. In addition to monitoring the agreed-upon introduction of more minorities into the country’s various territorial police forces, IPTF undertook comprehensive efforts to support the launching of a new Federation Police Academy, to develop specialized units such as an organized crime unit, and to place specialists alongside their Bosnian counterparts, including senior police leadership. IPTF solicited specific police specialities from contributing countries, became more exigent in its recruitment and introduced competitive internal promotions. Moreover, as part of the UN effort to make the Bosnian police more responsive to citizens rather than to the state, IPTF required all ten federation cantonal police and the Republika Srpska police to sign a commitment to ‘democratic policing’ principles before they could receive assistance. Despite the implementation delays that this conditionality produced, it reflected a broader sensitivity and commitment to transforming the broad organizational culture of policing, rather than rushing in to improve capabilities without ensuring the proper use of these enhanced capabilities.

However, the Bosnia mission also illustrates many of the constraints facing CIVPOL as an instrument of institution-building. The turnover of personnel, in the words of one IPTF official, ‘is what kills these CIVPOL missions’. The high turnover among IPTF’s top leaders, where one-year terms are common, means that the internal organization of the mission changed frequently in its first three years, with senior leaders departing when they were just beginning to grasp the complex political realities and obstacles facing them. While describing recruitment of monitors as ‘vastly improved’, one IPTF official lamented the ‘woefully inadequate’ results of recruitment for specialized areas within IPTF. Another IPTF official expressed regret ‘that there is no library or clearinghouse of policies and programmes of prior CIVPOL missions that can serve to inform new international policing missions’.

More importantly, high turnover and reliance upon senior police officers with little experience in prior peacekeeping settings undermines the ability of CIVPOL to manage the deeply political task of monitoring agreements to incorporate former warring parties into the police. In general, police institutional development in Bosnia remains disappointing, largely constrained by the intransigent positions of the different ethnically-based ruling political parties. After three years, the initial inauguration of the police – a starting point for institution-building efforts – had not occurred in two of the Federation’s ten cantons, and only in late 1997 did Republika
Srpska meet conditions for inauguration. In other cantonal police forces, formal induction of minorities has occurred, but informal separate ethnically-based chains of command are the norm rather than the exception. In Republika Srpska, the process of integrating minorities has lagged largely because a central purpose of Dayton – the return of significant numbers of displaced minorities – has not yet occurred. Interestingly, the police element of the implementation of the Dayton Accords has outpaced other elements of the peacekeeping effort, and IPTF has played the hand it has been dealt fairly well. Nevertheless, better conceived and organized international efforts might have made a more significant impact.

Reorganizing Police Support for Peacebuilding?

The limitations CIVPOL faces in its institution-building role underscore the challenges faced by the international community in its role as agent of civilian police development. Currently the international community, including the United Nations, lacks an international agency dedicated wholly to police and/or judicial institution-building. The United States has ICITAP, but no comparable institution exists at the intergovernmental level. CIVPOL perhaps comes closest in police development, but we have seen its shortcomings in this role.

Consequently, international efforts to develop foreign police forces after wars have combined organizational mechanisms which have varied from place to place. Such efforts have utilized some combination of (a) CIVPOL and other UN agencies such as the UN Development Programme; (b) bilateral police assistance, especially from ICITAP, the Spanish Guardia Civil, and the various police forces of France and Canada; and (c) police missions of regional organizations such as the OSCE and the WEU. Within this context, many of the most crucial institution-building activities have occurred either before CIVPOL’s arrival – when police structures are renegotiated during peace talks – or after the departure of CIVPOL – when specialized units and mechanisms of internal accountability are usually not yet operational. For example, in El Salvador, during peace talks the UN hired a team of European and Canadian police experts to design the doctrine and structure of the new National Civilian Police; the United States provided many trainers through ICITAP once an agreement was reached; Spain and other European countries provided the remainder of trainers through bilateral aid passed through the UN Development Programme (UNDP); CIVPOL provided monitoring and on-the-job training during deployment; and ICITAP and UNDP funded separate teams of international advisers after CIVPOLs departure. In fact, during peacekeeping operations
in El Salvador, Haiti and Somalia, bilateral programmes and other UN agencies provided the design, the curriculum and the bulk of resources for the development of new police forces. In the arena of judicial institution-building, a comparable combination of UN, bilateral and regional organizational efforts also prevails, although no counterpart to CIVPOL exists. In Cambodia, for example, the UN Human Rights Centre supervised a training programme for judges, police and prosecutors.

The international community has three options as it considers ways to strengthen its capabilities for fostering police and judicial institutional development. First, the international community could continue with the present ad hoc system that relies heavily on bilateral donors and diverse organizations, with CIVPOL oriented largely towards its monitoring role. This option enjoys the advantages of maintaining current UN staff levels and of letting different bilateral and regional actors and UN agencies respond to the demands and context of each specific mission on their own terms.

But this option has several disadvantages. Most importantly, it precludes the possibility of any systematic accumulation of knowledge or continuity of personnel and policies at the international level. The current ad hoc approach is characterized by a total lack of coordination and continuity across missions. It ensures that fresh senior police officers, new to international police development, will continue to dominate police missions, requiring the reinvention of the wheel with each new operation. The emerging reliance upon regional organization such as the OSCE only aggravates this problem, undercutting even what limited expertise has accumulated within CIVPOL, despite the retention of some CIVPOL personnel. The current system also leaves institution-building in the hands of organizations – be they CIVPOL, bilateral actors or regional organizations – which tend to be more urgently concerned with ensuring ceasefires and monitoring interim security rather than institutional development.

In addition, the current system relies heavily upon bilateral donors, who have their own interests which for historic or diplomatic reasons might undermine overall objectives of promoting a neutral, representative, civilian police force. In sum, although improvisation has produced impressive results given the shortfall of resources and the time constraints, it is preferable to systematize and institutionalize a set modality that will increase the capacity of the international community to help states develop humane and apolitical police forces.

A second option is for the international community to strengthen CIVPOL’s role as coordinator and agent of international police development. This option would entail not simply addressing CIVPOL’s
problems in its peacekeeping and monitoring role, but bolstering its peacebuilding capabilities as well. Hiring new specialists in institutional development within the CIVPOL office in New York and developing a list of institution-building experts from prior missions (separate from the list of top-quality CIVPOL monitors) would be useful. Deploying these experts very early in a peacekeeping mission might help enable them to play a coordinating role with other donors, and there are good reasons to ask the UN to coordinate rather than duplicate or compete with the efforts of member-states.43

Yet fundamental problems exist here too. CIVPOL’s links to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations means that its tenure in a country is often limited to the duration of the peacekeeping operation and generally oriented towards an urgent security crisis. Other UN agencies, such as the UN Development Programme, are focused upon longer-term institution-building of police, judicial and human rights institutions. Therefore, the UN’s ability to coordinate police development before, during and after peacekeeping operations might not enjoy much of a boost from adding specialists to CIVPOL. Bilateral programmes with continuous involvement both before and after the arrival of CIVPOL arrival will be understandably reluctant to be ‘coordinated’ by a relatively short-term actor.

A third option, which we favour, is to create a unit separate from CIVPOL specifically for institutional development of police forces – or preferably for the development of the full range of judicial, police and penal institutions. While the UN could strengthen CIVPOL’s capacity to carry out its original monitoring functions through some of the reforms discussed earlier, a new UN unit would consist of a group of specialists in such areas as restructuring police forces, creating academies and curricula, and setting up internal control units. Similarly, experienced experts in legal reform, court administration, rehabilitation reform and improved coordination among prosecutors, investigators and judges could be incorporated, acknowledging that the challenges of reforming judicial practices embedded in diverse legal systems and cultures differ from those of police development. Such a UN ‘Justice Development Unit’ (‘JDU’) might be drawn from police and judicial development experts from prior CIVPOL missions or other UN, bilateral or regional programmes. Based in New York, its members could not only deploy to take part in peacekeeping operations, but also assist in police and judicial development in a particular country for a multiyear period during each stage of international involvement – from peace talks through post-peacekeeping activities aimed at preventing the recurrence of conflict. A JDU could become a coordinating agent for international police assistance efforts, including CIVPOL and regional actors. It could also alleviate the chronic tendency to
‘reinvent the wheel’ with every new UN peacekeeping operation; creating an institutional home would also build institutional memory.

It is important that such a unit be truly multinational rather than relying on those countries that are perceived as having the most ‘professionalized’ or ‘advanced’ police or judicial institutions. Many Europeans and North Americans believe that their countries have the most capable and democratic police forces, for example. However, a number of developing countries have professional, democratic police forces. Any entity within the United Nations must avoid both the reality and the perception of bias, including in its police support units.

Having a truly multinational unity, moreover, would be better insurance against the mistaken assumption that there exists a single police or legal model that can be transferred from one context to another. In the realm of policing, international development specialists should seek to promote core elements of effective, humane, community-oriented policing which cut across nationalities and cultures. Neither the United Nations nor bilateral donors should impose a single ‘model’ – not even a ‘multicultural’ one drawn up by a multinational team – on any country’s police structure, much less its legal structure. Although those countries that were colonized by the same country may have roughly similar organizational models, no two countries will have the same police or judicial systems, because no two countries will have the same culture and history. The dangers of trying to transplant a single model without attention to local traditions and circumstances are just as high as the legacy of colonially-imposed state structures in the developing world. We envision a unit with expertise in adapting accepted international policing norms to distinct cultures and societies in conjunction with members of those societies. Although the formation of a new Justice Development Unit might seem unlikely in the prevailing political climate of cutbacks, it would be a sensible investment for the United Nations.

Becoming more deeply involved in member-states’ security institutions does expose the UN to the risk of abetting the establishment of repressive or abusive institutions. In this respect, UN police assistance programmes run a risk similar to the track record established by US bilateral programmes in the 1960s. Elements of the US Agency for International Development are still wary of police aid because the agency’s image was marred by its association with torturers, murderers and coup-makers in the 1960s and 1970s. The UN needs to ensure to the fullest extent possible that minimum standards of democratic accountability and political will for reform exist, before launching development programmes that might tag the UN with the reputation of facilitating authoritarian or brutal practices. This will not be an easy task, as the places most in need of such assistance are often the least propitious for their success – but it is doable.
A growing number of states in the throes of political transition are interested in the reform of old security apparatuses. Although those states that receive civilian police are frequently the subject of a peacekeeping operation, there are also many states that do not host a peacekeeping operation but that could still benefit greatly from the presence of civilian police. For instance, prior to the 1994 South African elections, Archbishop Desmond Tutu called for an international police force that would assist the South African police during the April elections. His call went unanswered— for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was because there was no institution that he could turn to and have his request heard. In this instance Tutu was asking for a civilian police force to monitor the local South African police, but after the election he could as easily have requested international assistance for retraining the South African police force. The international community has good reasons to reconsider its current institutional instruments for fostering responsive and accountable public security systems in the long run.

Conclusion

The neglect of police is both understandable and curious. Powerful norms of sovereignty in the field of international security have fostered a disregard for those functions of government that are viewed as primarily internal in nature. Yet if the maintenance of political order is a key function of government, and if the legitimacy of government is largely shaped by whether and how it provides order, then the international community must channel more resources to confront an issue which has become central to international peace and security.

Furthermore, if the international community takes seriously its commitment to foster democratic practices and long-term peace, then it should take a careful look at the instruments it has at its disposal. The worst-case scenario of following the suggestions presented here is that the international community could carry out its expanding policing-related tasks in a more coherent, organized way with cops who are prepared for it, rather than military forces who are not. Under the best-case scenario, the international community faces the opportunity to help supplant pervasive traditions of militarized and politicized public security forces. And international actors could contribute to the construction of institutions that are more representative of society, that conduct themselves more humanely and professionally, and that can perhaps help reduce the chances of renewed armed conflict.

Finally, we suspect that the very development of international bodies with the abilities to provide police monitoring and training will create their
own demand. The explosion of election monitoring is a good case in point: the increased demand for election monitoring led to the creation of regional and international election-monitoring capacities, and once these capacities were in place it created a greater demand for them. We envision a similar dynamic for civilian police. Many countries in the throes of a democratic transition have focused exclusively on ballots and on encouraging the military to return to the barracks. Meanwhile the police, who hold most responsibility for public order and who are the state institution most in touch with the people, are rarely discussed in political reform proposals. The existence of a UN unit prepared to provide professional training for specialized policing skills might facilitate reforms to a greater number of police forces around the world, even where peacekeeping operations are not warranted.

There is growing acknowledgement that genuine security is bound up with comprehensive security, and that comprehensive security starts with the rule of law. In the rush to identify mechanisms that will encourage the establishment of democratic practices, however, the fundamental and irreplaceable role of civilian police has suffered neglect. The international community would do well to elevate this critical issue and consider ways of institutionalizing its capacity to deploy a few more ‘good cops’.

NOTES


7. Thomas David Lobe, U.S. Police Assistance for the Third World, PhD Dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan, 1975; Martha K. Huggins,


10. References as in n.9 above, esp. Rikhye et al., pp.109–10, 293–94. The third operation involving civilian police, though not under the name ‘CIVPOL’, was UNTEA in the western half of New Guinea.

11. One exception was Great Britain in the development of civilian administrative bureaucracies, including police, in many of its colonies.


21. For discussion of different ‘public security gaps’, cf. Oakley et al., 1998 (see n.16 above).

22. Personal interview conducted by Chuck Call, October 1996. Anonymity requested.


24. Interviews by Chuck Call with US officials who requested anonymity, Port-au-Prince, August 1996; Washington, D.C., October 1996. The UN consultant to the Civilian Police Unit in New York reported in a telephone interview with the author in June 1997 that some 40 of the 200 US police serving in the UN mission in Bosnia had deserted.
25. Personal interview by Chuck Call with a long-serving senior IPTF official, April 1999, Sarajevo.

26. Phone interview by Chuck Call with Michael Emery, consultant to the Civilian Police Unit in New York, June 1997.

27. A more remote danger is that permanent UN police monitors might become some sort of global political police or the locus of illegal activities or abuse. The rare incidents of corruption or abusive conduct by CIVPOL in the past have been the responsibility of a few individuals, and no CIVPOL have been accused of spying for their own government. As with today’s CIVPOL, the units proposed here would not generally have powers of arrest or enforcement, and therefore would not in any way change the norms which limit UN interference in members states’ politics. Furthermore, they would be comprised of the top police officers of their respective forces. The UN should nevertheless practise what it preaches, and any standby police force should include careful screening procedures (including for human rights violations) for admission to its police support units, performance standards, and a specialized investigative oversight mechanism.

28. Obviously, using cops instead of soldiers does not alleviate policymakers’ responsibility to protect the lives of these officers and to use care in deciding when to undertake a peacekeeping operation.

29. For more on the different security gaps facing peacekeeping settings, see Oakley et al., 1998 (n.16 above).


31. Interview by Chuck Call with Jan Stromsem, Director of ICITAP, 11 October 1996.


39. Personal interview with UNMIBH official requesting anonymity, Sarajevo, March 1999. Even where top-notch experts have been hired, as in the 30-person IPTF unit to develop Bosnian capabilities to combat organized crime, it is unrealistic to think that outsiders can manage, in the course of six months or one year, to understand the complex political and criminal relationships well enough to make much headway in rooting out such problems within the local police.

40. Personal interview with IPTF official who requested anonymity, Sarajevo, April 1999.

41. Personal interviews with several IPTF officials concurred on this point. See also UN Secretary-General’s report to the Security Council, S/1998/227, 12 March 1998.

42. For instance, whereas the UN and the USA exhibited an overall spirit of cooperation in El Salvador, they were at loggerheads over several important issues in the development of the