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Boulder: CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995.**

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## **Book Reviews**

**Weiss, Thomas G. ed. *The United Nations and Civil Wars* . Boulder: CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995.**

Of the 13 UN peacekeeping operations undertaken from 1945-87, only two (the Congo and Cyprus) were deployed to civil wars. However, in the operations established since 1988, that number has risen to 18 out of 27. Notably, it was not just the destination that changed for UN peacekeeping operations, but its doctrine as well. Traditionally, UN peacekeeping referred to the interposition of a neutral force between two warring states once a ceasefire had been agreed to. However, to meet the challenge of intra-state conflicts, UN peacekeepers are now being asked to conduct elections, assist in civil administration, repatriate refugees, and protect humanitarian convoys. These developments have raised a number of critical questions: why did this shift occur? what are the new requirements for peacekeeping operations? what have been the results? In Thomas G. Weiss' edited collection, *The United Nations and Civil Wars* , an attempt at addressing these questions has been made.

*The United Nations and Civil Wars* utilizes a multidisciplinary approach which combines theory and cases in a clear structural framework. It begins with a section on the likely locales for civil wars (the Third World, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union). This is followed by an examination of the various components of multifunctional operations (military, civil administration, and humanitarian). These concepts are then explored in the four case studies (former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Somalia, and El Salvador). Bracketing these studies are introductory and concluding essays by Weiss.

The section on present and future locales for civil wars, while definitely a good idea, has been weakened by the inadequacies of the chapters supplied. Stephen Shenfield's profile of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union provides a useful summary of active and potential conflicts (pp. 32-35), causes of conflict (pp. 35-40), new types of conflict (p. 41), and the role of Russia and the UN (pp. 41-46). However, Mohammed Ayoob's look at the Third World neglects many significant issues: Third World conflicts which are not based on ethnic fighting; how the end of the Cold War allowed many regional conflicts to be resolved; and a listing of facilitating and constraining factors for UN involvement.

The heart of *The United Nations and Civil Wars* is in its theoretical examination of the three components of UN operations in civil wars. Analysis of the military phase is particularly strong due to John Mackinlay's correct assertion that "unless it can deploy a more effective instrument, UN authority will be seriously diminished with the rise of intracommunal violence." (p. 51) Mackinlay then goes on to describe the specific capabilities and limitations of low-level, mid-level, and high-level military operations. Jaret Chopra also does an excellent job when he outlines the various issues related to UN governance of fractured societies (administration, effectiveness, transition, mandate, international presence, and instruments of authority). Larry Minear's chapter on the

theoretical context for UN humanitarian missions is another asset to this book. Minear concentrates his efforts on exploring his contention that "UN humanitarian activities can benefit from the accomplishments of its diplomats and troops." (p. 91) These theoretical chapters are later bridged in Weiss' conclusion, when he identifies the commonalities of the military-political-humanitarian obstacles that the UN faces in civil wars.

Unfortunately, the follow-up to these theoretical discussions is not as strong. This is due to the unevenness of the case studies. Strong chapters can be found in Michael W. Doyle and Ayaka Suzuki's documentation of the UN's attempt at civil administration in Cambodia, and Debarati G. Sapir and Hedwig Deconnick's analysis of the military humanitarian intervention in Somalia. This strength was most evident in the remark, and subsequent discussion, that "the financial implication of military involvement demands a cautious approach and justifies a better examination of the opportunity costs." (p. 168) However, this standard was not upheld by the other two case studies. Age Eknes' examination on the former Yugoslavia is weakened by his decision to explore a civil war which actually "consist[s] of at least three interconnected struggles." (p. 111) Given the space limitations in this book, Eknes should have limited himself to either Croatia or Bosnia. Meanwhile, Cristina Eguizabal's chapter on El Salvador is also out of sorts in this collection. The thrust of her argument is that it was "the weight of the international community" which allowed El Salvador to end its conflict. However, because Eguizabal did not benefit from an earlier theoretical chapter, she was forced to combine theory and evidence in her brief chapter. It appears to this reader that Weiss edited out a theoretical chapter on the political role of great and regional powers from the final version of *The United Nations and Civil Wars*.

In conclusion, *The United Nations and Civil Wars* constitutes a valuable contribution to peacekeeping in internal conflicts. Its major assets are the three theoretical chapters and Weiss' conclusion. However, if a reader is looking only for information on one of the cases, better studies are available elsewhere.

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