



# A C C O R D O C C A S I O N A L P A P E R

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## Civilian Peace-Keepers - A Future Challenge

by Christian Hårleman

***The basic paradox of peace-keeping is the fact that it is a peaceful third party intervention but it is often carried out on the ground by soldiers. (B.Fetherston)***

### Introduction

United Nations peace-keeping operations have increasingly entered internal conflict areas, in which the role of an overstressed United Nations has become more complex, comprehensive and, consequently, more demanding. The United Nations now routinely faces challenges which do not always fit into a "first" or "second" generation of peace-keeping and the Member States are less inclined to be involved in operations which are considered politically insecure or may develop into costly undertakings where lives may be lost, thus creating difficulties in national and domestic politics. If peace-keeping is to remain one of the United Nations' most important instruments for securing world peace, it requires improved as well as new peace-keeping mechanisms in areas where the international community faces potential or existing conflicts. This not only obligates greater efforts by the Member States to provide a timely availability of troops and to have them more rapidly deployed, but it also requires them to explore and find other means for more progressive and improved peace-keeping.

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So far civilians have been used to a certain extent, but institutionalizing their participation in a manner similar to military employment, has rarely been discussed. Is it feasible to expand civilian participation, or in some functions replace military personnel with civilians, and thus improve the flexibility and ability of an operation? Can a cadre of civilians make the same contribution as a contingent of military observers? This article discusses the possibility of a more frequent and carefully conceptualized use of civilians which might enhance the capacity of peace-keeping. It is not an academic essay or an analytical exercise, but more an attempt to describe some areas and operational functions where civilian peace-keepers may be used. Initially the document describes peace-keeping in its historical context, emphasizing the shift from military observing and reporting operations to current multi-dimensional operations and their increased involvement of civilians. The next part briefly assesses the future and the possibilities to be considered, and the last part proposes an enlargement of the civilian participation in peace-keeping operations and the establishment of a civilian peace monitor corps to be deployed in international and/or regional settings.

## Peace-keeping and the Historical Context

Peace-keeping was born out of necessity and became a practical mechanism for containing conflicts and facilitating their settlement. From the very outset, the concept was based primarily on two principles: that United Nations peace-keeping operations should take place only with the consent of the states concerned, and that force should not be applied to end the hostilities.

Since these very first days of the peace-keeping endeavor, United Nations efforts in the maintenance of peace have passed through several phases of development. The first period, between 1948 and 1956, was an experimental phase, in which the United Nations introduced an international observation and reporting system with a view to maintaining fragile cease-fires. The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) originate from this time and both are still in existence. The next phase—1956 to 1967—was characterized by escalating tension by the two super powers. Increasing rivalry for hegemony in the Third World fueled conflicts and in order to help achieve a cease-fire and maintain international peace, peace-keeping forces were launched in the Sinai, Congo and Cyprus. The introduction of military forces was an innovative challenge. The instrument was further refined, and terms such as “buffer zones,” “interposition” and “multi-dimensional” were used for the first time. Although, in the beginning great expectations were placed on these forces, the deteriorating climate between East and West and the

impaired financial situation of the United Nations hampered the further use of the peace-keeping instrument and peace-keeping entered what might be called the dormant period—1967-1973. Due to the Yom Kippur War peace-keeping was encouraged and revitalized and some new operations were established in Sinai (again) and on the Golan Heights. Up to this time, peace-keeping operations were mainly policing forces in which the military elements predominated. Except for the operation in the Congo, few civilians were employed.

The end of the Cold War altered the tone of United Nations peace and security activities and the international community witnessed a dramatic development, which testified to the changes in the political environment. The newly established harmony between the major powers contributed to the Security Council’s capability for solving long-standing conflicts and the United Nations was inundated with requests for peace-keeping operations. Operations in South West Africa (later Namibia) and Central America experienced a new dynamic—more complex and more comprehensive peace-keeping, in which the United Nations was asked to advance international peace and security on a wider scale. This new development required combining traditional peace-keeping with some novel methods, such as upholding basic legal standards, monitoring of local police forces, supervision of elections and humanitarian assistance. As a consequence the employment of civilians increased considerably. So far peace-keeping had adhered more or less to the traditional concept but developments in Cambodia, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia changed the pattern. The United Nations now became involved in conflicts which were more intra-state in character and the complexity and comprehensive nature of these conflicts sometimes went beyond the capacity of the United Nations. The massive interventions in these countries produced some gray areas between peace-keeping and peace-enforcement and sometimes the combination of political and humanitarian mandates was less successful. Despite considerable financial and political support, some very visible operations were not fully successful; often they were launched too late to be effective; and became too expensive to sustain international support.

Between 1948 and 1987, the United Nations had initiated 13 peace-keeping operations but only five of them were still in existence in 1988, of which four were related to inter-state conflicts and only one to an intra-state dispute. Out of the 28 operations established from 1988-1996, only eight may be referred to as conflicts of inter-state character and the rest considered as intra-state conflicts. As a result, the international community is now more concerned with the major causes of systemic and intractable violent conflict such as ethnic, religious and socio-economic factors, with less emphasis on preventing or containing conflicts between nations. Although security and stability remain a major problem, the means to achieve it have changed dramatically.

Today there is a new political context that requires a broader and more collaborative approach, which considers traditional notions of diplomacy along with the socio-economic development of nations and peoples involved in conflict. Therefore, the use of highly visible tools, such as multilateral peace-keeping forces, is no longer always feasible.

## **The Experience of the Expansion of Civilian Roles in Peace-keeping (Peace) Operations**

Experiences indicate that the Member States are less inclined to be involved in operations which are considered politically insecure or might develop into costly undertakings with the loss of lives and thus create difficulties in domestic politics. Therefore, the use of traditional peace-keeping operations has become less common and as a result the number of peace-keeping troops has decreased from 75,000 in mid-1994 to 25,000 in mid-1997. Compared with previous and traditional peace-keeping operations, this "second" generation of peace-keeping has also witnessed a dramatic enlargement of civilian participation, mostly as a result of several operations having become more accessible and more humanitarian in nature. The following section briefly discusses the preconditions and consequences of the military and civilian employment.

### **Military Forces (Force Level Missions)**

Peace-keeping has developed from what is sometimes called first generation (traditional) to second generation peace-keeping activities. The first generation of peace-keeping consists of operations where maintenance of cease-fires and separation of forces were the major objectives. Second generation operations are generally said to include: preventive deployment; implementation of comprehensive settlements; and protection of humanitarian operations during continuing conflicts. There is a significant difference in staffing between first and second generations of peace-keeping. The traditional operations employed primarily military personnel although some civilian functions, particularly in the administrative fields, were staffed by civilians from the United Nations Secretariat. The second generation of peace-keeping witnessed a multiplicity in the operational demands which could not be met by the military and subsequently civilian personnel were recruited to a greater extent. Initially, they were employed from the Secretariat but due to the increasing need, recruitment was later expanded to include the United Nations system, and thus all UN organizations and UN agencies. However, the expansion of peace-keeping and its comprehensive activities, particularly in Cambodia, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia asked for a further enlargement of the civilian components, which forced the organization to find suitable candidates from outside the system. Unfortunately, this recruitment too often resulted in

employment of unqualified personnel with limited ability and almost non-existent knowledge and understanding of United Nations political and operational concepts.

### **Observer and Similar Missions**

Sometimes observer or verification missions are combined with, or under the command of, force-level missions. The Observer Missions emanate from the end of the 40s, and in the Cold War era five Military Observer Missions were set up and assigned tasks such as supervising a cease-fire and/or an armistice agreement, verifying the withdrawal of troops and monitoring border areas. In general, the officers are full-time professionals, but some countries have contributed part-time reserve officers. This healthy blend of professionals and "civilians" has proven to be useful, particularly in missions where there is not a high level of hostile military activity. Experience demonstrates that the military observers have been an excellent complement to peace-keeping forces, since their "unarmed" presence is generally not considered a threat to the conflicting parties. Due to these circumstances military observers have, in a number of operations, been able to promote consent and positive cooperation not only between the United Nations and the conflicting parties, but also between the parties themselves. Not surprisingly, their tasks have gradually been expanded to include duties within the humanitarian, political, administrative and logistical areas. Their ability and general competence has proven that services of military observers quite often overlap both military and civilian functions and therefore they may be considered more or less as General Purpose Officers.

With the expansion of United Nations' peace-keeping, other types of observer missions were established such as: civilian police monitor missions; geographical observers mission (UNHCOI in Iraq); "verifiers" (UNSCOM in Iraq); election monitors; election observers, and EC monitors, etc. In general these missions only employ civilians, although some have a military background—functional titles like supervisors, monitors and observers indicate the level of responsibility. While military observers have gained an excellent reputation, this raises the question whether in the future their military appearance (uniform) may be more necessary than their general competence. If this is the case, is it possible that some of their traditional functions can be taken over by civilians with the necessary experience? The question concerning uniform is important as the uniform serves as a recognized and visible confirmation of the international community's support of a mission, and that the host country has officially accepted the presence of national and international bodies.

### **Civilian Police**

In the beginning of the 60s the first civilian police mission was deployed in Cyprus as a complement to the already existing peace-keeping force. Under the umbrella of the

force, the mission had a weak mandate and its usefulness was sometimes questioned. However, the experience gained became important and served as useful guidance when the civilian police concept was extended to other missions. Financial and political constraints on United Nations peace-keeping promoted an increased deployment of civilian police contingents and the huge missions at the beginning of the 90s witnessed contingents of several hundred police officers. Their "unarmed" presence and non-military appearance made them more politically eligible than military observers and their tasks, with no law enforcement power, comprised monitoring/counselling of local police activities concerning basic security and law-and-order e.g. criminal investigation, arrest/detention and crowd control. In the last few years their duties have been further expanded to include training and assistance in creation of reliable police forces in countries where the law and order resources are not adequate. In their specific role civilian police monitors have proven to be an excellent instrument in the peace-keeping environment and, except for some general areas, their functions cannot be handled by civilian personnel.

## Security Components

Traditionally, provision of security has been a task for peace-keeping units which were repeatedly asked to provide secure conditions for international personnel engaged in humanitarian activities. Although gradually accepted, the last few years' experiences have resulted in a reluctance from involved humanitarian agencies and organizations in addition to providers and beneficiaries. There are various reasons for this, but the involvement of military forces in humanitarian operations has not always been appreciated and has raised a number of conceptual and operational questions. Other means have therefore been explored. The United Nations Guard Contingent in Iraq was established in 1991 as a response to the requirement of security for the humanitarian community working in Northern Iraq. Its operations are based on three elements: the local authorities, the humanitarian community, and the UN Guard. The operational concept consists of protection and confidence-building activities. These kinds of burden-sharing activities have contributed to an enhancement of the security environment which has allowed the humanitarian community to efficiently provide assistance to suffering groups. A study undertaken by the UN Department for Humanitarian Affairs recognized the usefulness in utilizing civilians instead of military entities. Although dressed in the uniforms of the United Nations security, the organization is considered to be a civilian entity. This interesting but little-known concept deserves closer attention, particularly in combination with the concept of the new rescue unit currently deployed in Haiti.

## Civilian Functions

In the early years of peace-keeping, and particularly in the Cold War era, the civilians were mainly personnel from the

Field Administration Division (which later became Field Administration and Logistic Division) of the United Nations. Their main responsibility was to provide all the administrative and logistic support which was not directly provided by participating Governments. At the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s, the involvement of civilians had largely expanded, particularly where a peace-keeping operation had to perform duties of a non-military nature. In missions such as those in Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia and Somalia, the civilians, apart from their traditional support to the military forces, performed duties similar to those of a civilian society, as well as large and mandated humanitarian assistance programmes. The involvement of civilians changed the peace-keeping concept. Military dominance decreased and their operations were mainly mandated to support and protect humanitarian activities. This gave birth to a second generation of peace-keeping which assumed that the more robust role of military elements should be to secure the environment and thus facilitate the delivery of humanitarian services in affected areas. The combination of military and humanitarian mandates raised conceptual and operational concerns and has fostered international reluctance to deploy peace-keeping operations with any kind of enforcement capability. Not much has been written about the role of civilians and their lessons learned in peace-keeping, although there is comprehensive documentation and a number of studies on political and humanitarian activities and their impact on affected populations. It is estimated that the number of civilians working directly in an operation authorized by the Security Council has increased in traditional peace-keeping from 6-9% up to approximately 20% during the most recent operations.

## The Future

The peace-keeping world was, by the nature of the conflicts, a military world, and there was, very understandably, a bias towards military vocabulary and terminology. Although this language is understood, it is not always correctly interpreted by the civilian community and vice versa. Already there is conflict over use of the word 'conflict'. Currently the words, 'pre conflict', 'conflict' and 'post conflict' are used in an attempt to define the level and the period of diverse interests. Conflicts are possible whenever or wherever diverse interests are activated. Consequently it may be argued that a conflict is always present either as a potential or as an existing conflict. Thus, conflicts are inevitable and dramatic changes, to a certain extent, preventable. Correct or not, conflicts have their own identities and there are always numerous attempts to define and establish different categories of conflicts. Nevertheless, adequate preparations for the next century demand an analysis of potential and existing conflicts.

## Future Conflicts

Mohammed Sahnoun (then Joint OAU/UN Special Representative to the Great Lakes region) has discussed five

realistic potential and/or existing conflicts. It may be argued that some of them are not relevant, but the lessons learned prove that violence may be a potential outcome of all of them: (i) failure in the creation of nation states, where a slow process of national integration may be undermined by a dangerous process that causes monopolization of power by a specific ethnic group; (ii) products of a colonial legacy, which are mostly linked with the drawing of borders by the colonial powers, but also unrealistic constitutions are linked to the uncertainty in which marginal populations found themselves after independence; (iii) products of a Cold War legacy, where liberation wars or social revolts became compounded and where old links are still maintained to dubious forces in the outside world; (iv) conflicts of religious character, where the population is separated along religious lines and where populations are the victims of manipulation from over-ambitious leaders; and (v) conflicts of socio-economic character, where the conditions are perceived incorrectly and violence is a potential outcome in the absence of a democratic system.

Although briefly referred to, the analysis indicates the new pattern of conflicts in which military conflicts are no longer the dominating factor. Instead, the conflicts appear to be more of a national or regional nature, where injustices of various kinds are a prevailing factor. The root causes must be addressed and the involvement of military forces seems to be less important. Use of the military capacity can, however, never be excluded. It should, if necessary, be used more as a coercive force in combination with other more rewarding mechanisms as later indicated.

## Future Operations

Although the United Nations in recent years has greatly improved its capacity in managing complex emergencies, the organization needs to find further innovations if it is to be prepared for the challenges of the next century. Recognizing the current development of possible conflicts, a new generation of peace-keeping is considered: the "inducement of peace" operations. These operations—third generation if implemented—have the intent of restoring civil societies where they have broken down by using two applications: "(i) the use of positive incentives to induce, in the first instance, consent and cooperation with the peace operation, and beyond that reconciliation; and (ii) the threat of coercion to gain consent and cooperation". The major objective in the inducement of peace operations is to actively promote the peace-building process, including political objectives. (The Namibia operation may serve as a foundation).

In "positive inducement", the strategy is not to detain or contain but rather initially to convince, and later, if so required, to influence the conflicting parties by providing positive rewards such as development assistance of various kinds—or simply to find substantial means for rebuilding the

confidence among and between parties. However, to implement this strategy requires a new philosophy. An understanding of local complexities and a flexible response at various levels is important – but knowledge of the "rewarding tool" is also expedient. The technique requires civilian or military personnel with an excellent understanding, not only of the conflict itself, but also of the local implications of the conflict, as well as a profound knowledge of the various means available for "rewarding" implementation. Under these circumstances possibilities to mobilize national or regional competence should be explored.

The second option "the threat of coercion" intends to intimidate non-cooperating elements into cooperating. When the objective has been achieved and necessary consent/assurance obtained, then a positive inducement operation ensues. "Such an operation takes into account that consent was granted only in the face of the intimidating force and that a credible force is required if consent is to be maintained. Simultaneously, however, it operates on the basis of freely-given consent on the part of much of the population and regards this as a valuable asset to be protected and nurtured". The limitations are obvious and the lessons learned from past, less successful operations indicate the difficulties. However, to be successful it requires a "credible coercive capacity" force. Nevertheless, "coercive inducement" should not be considered as an isolated activity but more as a complement to "positive inducement"—or very simply – a responsive and flexible use of the carrot and the stick. Thus positive inducement requires a more broad and rewarding approach, while the coercive objective probably demands a more robust solution and it subsequently becomes more an obligation for the military.

To challenge future conflicts the international community must be flexible. Use of one approach should not exclude the use of the others. The two generations of peace-keeping styles, together with a new third generation will provide necessary flexibility when the peace-keeping tool is to be used.

## Requirements

Since the conflicts in question seem to be less military in nature and more a complex blend of political exploitation and severe socio-economic injustices and factionalism, there is a requirement to broaden understandings of existing conflicts and a need to create more of a common culture of preventive action and peace-building and less of peace-keeping as experienced. This can only be achieved with a more decentralized system and with involvement from all parties concerned which subsequently requires a mechanism with necessary institutional and conceptual arrangements enabling a better mobilization of the civilian capacity. Although less in demand, the new generation of peace-keeping must further widen its competence, and civilians should be more conceptually integrated than in previous

operations. Such an integration will allow future missions to have a more constructive and confidence-building character than in the past.

## Some Possible Solutions

### Utilization of Civilian Personnel in Peace-keeping Forces

All operations, as all complex organizations, consist of a variety of functions which respond to a specific task. The following break down of a multi-dimensional force into functions, separating the military from the civilian functions, clearly shows where there are requirements for civil personnel. The following should not be considered as a complete definition of the different and various roles but more an indication of the areas where civilian personnel may be used.

This figure clearly testifies to the multiplicity of United Nations peace-keeping from military policing to multi-disciplinary functions, in which the political element, humanitarian intervention/assistance and development assistance are significant and expanding subjects. Some are simple and obvious and some more interesting. For example, it is believed that properly trained civilians can assume some

tasks concerning observation and verification of cease-fires. Although this has been done to a certain extent it can be done more extensively. The establishment of a civilian peace monitor corps or increased employment of civilians in the military observer role are both feasible solutions. A 50/50 mix of civilian and military observers will provide necessary efficiency, visible confirmation of international support (the use of national uniforms) and an healthy utilization of civilian and military competencies. The figure also communicates the overwhelming presence of military forces and other military personnel which puts pressure on the civilians when the military, for political or other reasons, is not participating. The figure also shows the usefulness of civilian police personnel, who have the capacity to serve as a useful bridge between the military and civilian functions. In light of this it is obvious that the need to find and mobilize capacities outside the military establishment demands far more attention than it is currently given.

However, it is not only a question of quality but also of quantity, which raises another problem. Civilian society is not as organized as the military establishment. Even if the resources exist, the question of accessibility still remains: How

#### Functional Areas

#### Involvement of Mil. Forces, Mil.Pers, Civ, Pol or Civ.Pers

##### **Military Functions**

• Observation and verification of cease-fires	MF	MP	CIVPOL	CP
• Observation of buffer zones and withdrawal of foreign troops	MF	MP		
• Separation of forces.	MF	MP		
• Demobilization and destruction of weapons	MF	MP	CIVPOL	
• Establishment of secure conditions for delivery of humanitarian supplies	MF			
• Preventive deployment	MF	MP		
• Enforcement actions	MF			

##### **Civilian Police Functions**

• Monitoring, training and counseling of national/local police forces	CIVPOL			
• Investigation of human right abuses	MP		CIVPOL	CP
• Protection (Haiti)			CIVPOL	

##### **Governmental/Political Functions**

• Ensuring political independence	MF	MP	CIVPOL	CP
• Management of communal strife	MF	MP	CIVPOL	
• Negotiation with non-governmental entities		MP	CIVPOL	CP
• Assumption of temporary governmental authority and administration	MP		CIVPOL	CP
• Administration and conduct of elections/referendums	MP		CIVPOL	CP
• Verification of human rights agreements	MP		CIVPOL	CP

##### **Civil Functions**

• Humanitarian assistance	MF	MP	CIVPOL	CP
• Repatriation of refugees	MF	MP	CIVPOL	CP
• Management of local disputes			CIVPOL	CP
• Confidence-building measures	MF	MP	CIVPOL	CP
• Provision of security (Iraq)			CIVPOL	CP

do we find appropriate means to mobilize and prepare available assets? To mobilize civilian capacity, more attention should be given to the establishment of a focal point which should advocate better cooperation and collaboration between, and among, regional/sub-regional and non-governmental organizations. Such an arrangement should permanently assist the United Nations as well as the regional/international community to engage and prepare appropriate resources for a prompt and timely response. The United Nations would thereafter gradually share its burden of diplomatic and operational activities with regional organizations/institutions and non-governmental organisations, not only in international conflict management, but also in the national or regional settings.

## **Establishment of a Civilian Peace Monitor Corps**

These challenges, combined with pressures on scarce United Nations (and national) resources and less involvement from external powers, manifest the obligation to find an instrument capable of meeting the increasing requirements of the new political and humanitarian environment. In this respect, considerable attention should be given to the feasibility of institutionalization and education of civilian professionals, not only to supplement military peace-keeping forces but also to establish a separate peace monitoring and confidence-building instrument. Eligible individuals with the necessary knowledge and experience should be further trained in a systematic way and thus be able to undertake functions which generally comprise preventive activities, peace monitoring and assistance in the peace-building processes. Governmental assistance, political advice and assistance in humanitarian emergencies are all tasks that fall under these overarching functions. Such a civilian cadre, with all its potential expertise, should be established within appropriate regional and sub-regional organizations and dispatched to areas in conflict at the appropriate time.

Capacity building requires not only that the civilians have a good working knowledge of a complex multi-disciplinary system, but also that they acquire the ability to handle these intricate concerns. Therefore, the objectives will be to establish a peace monitor corps and to provide a better and coherent knowledge of the political and humanitarian environment—but also with regard to the theories of modern conflict management in general, and the United Nations' role in maintaining international peace and security in particular. Additionally, they will be given an improved understanding of the military elements in peace-keeping settings. Considering the national context and existing resources, it is further required to explore the potential for a combined national mobilization of military officers, civilian police and civilian professionals. The main objective should encompass the following:

- to build a corps of international peace monitors who are adequately trained/educated and prepared for immediate dispatch to duty in the international/regional arena;
- to augment the knowledge and proficiency of the region concerning the United Nations' role in international, political and security orders;
- to explore the potential for increased combined utilization of military officers, civilian police and civilian professionals in the international/regional arena
- to improve civilian/military relations.

Although the expressed idea concerning a peace monitor cadres is tentative, and requires further development and conceptualization, it outlines the possibilities to build a new structure which goes far beyond the traditional and highly centralized approach that currently exists. It is expected that the realization of a peace monitor corps will provide the international community with an efficient and cost-effective instrument with a broad knowledge and understanding of political and humanitarian operations, and with a flexible competence which can be utilized in most United Nations operations. It is assumed that the monitors should have such integrity that they also are able to undertake national and regional collaborative endeavors in the field, as required. Such burden-sharing undertakings will broaden the mechanics of mediation and conciliation, and provide opportunities to monitor existing or potential conflicts and advocate peaceful solutions.

## **Conclusions**

In the past military officers have dominated the stage and their professionalism and knowledge have been valuable assets for the operational management of complex situations. Their resources and military education have made them suitable for conflict management where disputes have escalated to hostilities and in volatile situations, where military machinery becomes a necessity. Their experience and professionalism advocated a new strategy for peace-keeping, and in the beginning of the 90s the world experienced a second generation of peace-keeping. However, the new political environment and the nature of existing and potential conflicts demands a more comprehensive and far-reaching approach. Conflicts need to be addressed at an early stage where the root causes and underlying differences require a new and more human approach. Preventive actions and peace-building must be considered to be global objectives. Therefore, the next generation of peace-keeping must be more progressive and civilian in nature in order to keep up with these new requirements. Subsequently, civilian society must be mobilized in a more coherent way.

This article has outlined the possibilities for an expanded use of civilians in UN peace-keeping. The needed civilian

resources exist and should be utilized not only in military operations but even more extensively by creating a new and innovative instrument suitable for the new environment. In order to realize these objectives, the United Nations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations need to develop an institutional cooperation, enabling the international community to meet the challenges of the next century.

## Note

Minor parts of this article have been used in articles concerning *Psychological Aspects on Peacekeeping on the Ground* presented to the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, US and *UN Guard Contingent in Iraq* presented to Department of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations.

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