
FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

***The UN As
Peace-keeper***

"International Crises, 1945-75: The UN Dimension" by Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Michael Brecher, in *International Studies Quarterly* (Mar. 1984), Quadrant Subscription Services Ltd., Oakfield House, Perrymount Rd., Haywards Heath RH16 3DH, England.

The United Nations (UN) is an easy target for critics on many counts. But according to Wilkenfeld and Brecher, political scientists at the University of Maryland and McGill University, respectively, it handles its toughest job very well.

In 160 international crises that occurred between 1945 and 1975, they found that the UN intervened in 95 cases and resolved only 28. Its overall success rate was thus 18 percent. Not, on the face of it, an impressive showing, the authors concede.

But they also found that the UN was much more likely to get involved, and to emerge successful, in more serious situations—measured by the level of violence, number of participants, degree of superpower involvement. Of the 28 UN successes, 21 involved armed conflict of some sort. The world organization did best during full-scale wars. It took an active role in mediating 29 of the 32 wars that occurred during these years and emerged with a settlement in 13 cases. Success stories include the India-Pakistan war of 1971 and the 1956 Suez Canal crisis.

Wilkenfeld and Brecher also found that UN intervention increased the chances for a settlement between the contending parties. Only 36 percent of the crises in which the UN was *not* involved were resolved by agreements (e.g., treaties, cease-fires). By contrast, with high-level UN activity by either the Security Council or the General Assembly, the success rate rose to 60 percent. Lower level UN mediation still produced mutual agreements in 50 percent of the cases.

The authors note that UN mediation often produces agreements without resolving underlying conflicts. But, overall, the organization's effectiveness has been "unfairly maligned."

ECONOMICS, LABOR, & BUSINESS

***Budget Deficits:
Maybe Not So Bad***

"A New View of the Federal Debt and Budget Deficits" by Robert Eisner and Paul J. Pieper, in *The American Economic Review* (Mar. 1984), 1313 21st Ave. So., Suite 809, Nashville, Tenn. 37212-2786.

Like almost everybody else in America, Eisner and Pieper, economists at Northwestern University and the University of Illinois, respectively, are worried about annual federal budget deficits. But they take the view that the deficits have been *too small* in recent years.