
Defense Report

AUSA



NATO's New Peacekeeping Role—It Lacks Teeth To Do the Job.

When the 16 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization recently voted to permit their armed forces to participate in peacekeeping missions beyond the immediate boundaries of their countries, they seemed to be putting the cart before the horse. The crux of the problem is that before you can *keep* the peace, somebody has to *make* peace.

In the case of Central Europe, the peacemakers need look no farther than the slaughter of innocents that is taking place in what once was called Yugoslavia to find ample justification for their services. But who is going to accept the responsibility to make the Serbians, Croats and other protagonists stop killing one another?

Not NATO. In passing the out-of-area peacekeeping resolution, that body failed to sanction the use of force. Further, NATO troops can only be committed—even on such passive duty as peacekeeping—only after a unanimous request from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, or CSCE, and the likelihood of that 35-nation political body agreeing on anything is practically nil.

Similarly, the U.N. peacekeeping force assigned to relieve the siege of Sarajevo does not have authority to take out the Serbian artillery that has destroyed the Bosnian capital and killed or wounded thousands of its citizens. How many more lives must be lost before the U.N. becomes convinced that economic sanctions won't stop the war? Will the Serbian leaders lift their siege of Sarajevo only after many more of its 300,000 citizens are dead?

If military action is the only way to provide relief to these starving victims, then the U.N. should resolve to take such action immediately. None of the many elements presently jockeying for the major role as guarantor of European security, including NATO, seem to be in a position to help. All this concern over who will be the world's policeman should be put aside at a time when there is such stark evidence that a cop is needed right now.