## Praise for *Beyond the National Interest*

*"A thoughtful and wide-ranging survey of the UN's contribution to peacekeeping and world politics after the Cold War. Jean-Marc Coicaud's study effectively combines the nuanced perspective of a former UN insider with the philosophic analysis of a disciplined scholar. I recommend it wholeheartedly to both UN practitioners and the students and professors who follow UN affairs."*

—Michael W. Doyle, Columbia University, and
former assistant secretary-general, United Nations

*"UN peacekeeping has become one of the central weapons for dealing with complex post-conflict situations in the international community's arsenal. UN peacekeeping is not the right tool for every job, but when our key principles are observed—not trying to keep peace where there's no peace to keep, ensuring that the peacekeepers accompany a political process, not substitute for one—the blue helmets have proved time and again that they are an effective, flexible and cost efficient mechanism for addressing some of the worlds most difficult crises. Coicaud's* Beyond the National Interest *represents a valuable contribution to the important debate on the future of UN peacekeeping."*

—Jean-Marie Guéhenno, UN Under-Secretary-General
for Peacekeeping Operations

*"Coicaud's rare combination of theoretical insight and practical experience sheds much light on one of the most crucial problems of world order: the legitimacy of international institutions."*

—Pierre Hassner, Centre d'Etudes et
de Recherches Internationales, Sciences Po

*"In* Beyond the National Interest, *Jean-Marie Coicaud cogently analyzes the weak position of the United Nations Secretary-General, faced with divisive great power interests and the enormous power of the United States. He appeals passionately for multilateralism as a system of legitimacy that could help to create a growing practice of what he calls international solidarity. His voice is one that America should hear."*

—Robert O. Keohane, Woodrow Wilson School of Public
and International Affairs, Princeton University

*"Coicaud's experience at the UN and his dual intellectual roots in political theory and international relations have enabled him to produce a book of considerable value to both the policy-making and scholarly communities. Combining a wealth of empirical material with compelling analytic insight,* Beyond the National Interest *makes a major contribution to the literature"*

—Charles A. Kupchan, Georgetown University and Council on Foreign Relations, author of *The End of the American Era*

*"Jean-Marc Coicaud makes the point that the need for complex, messy, multilateral peacekeeping and peacebuilding in failed states will not go away just because the Bush Administration wants it to.* Beyond the National Interest *describes the evolution of U.S. and U.N. efforts to keep and build peace from 1992 through to the present. It offers a insightful, pragmatic, and morally engaged examination of how we can and must adapt our international institutions to an "ethics of international solidarity." It is a timely and valuable book."*

—Anne-Marie Slaughter, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University

# BEYOND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

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## THE FUTURE OF UN PEACEKEEPING AND MULTILATERALISM IN AN ERA OF U.S. PRIMACY

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*To Susie and my parents*

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# Foreword

Speaking before the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 21, 1987, Ronald Reagan put forth his vision of the world's future, laying out what he characterized as his "fantasy": "In our obsession with antagonisms of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity....I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world." Although the international scene has changed markedly since Reagan made this remark, he expresses a simple truth about the human condition: man is often so focused on his own self-interests he forgets mankind's common interests. This truth informs the core of this illuminating volume, *Beyond the National Interest: The Future of UN Peacekeeping and Multilateralism in an Era of U.S. Primacy.*

Author and scholar Jean-Marc Coicaud broadly examines a singularly pressing question about the state of global affairs that is inextricably connected to this truth: what happened to international peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions? More specifically, how does one explain the continued adherence to narrow national interests among democratic countries in the face of compelling needs to intervene in and manage the profusion of international crises? Such questions are particularly vexing today when considering the growing number of conflicts and looming humanitarian disasters around the world. Although local communities and strong nations shape a response to a domestic crisis—based on bonds emanating from civil society, governmental agencies, and a common sense of identity—the international community's bonds are far more tenuous. Indeed, the established democracies of the West have found it difficult to live up to a central tenet of modern democratic culture: the extension and promotion of progress and human rights through internationalism and moral activism.

Coicaud provides a robust exploration of these and related issues, offering original and keen insights into the limitations of the United Nations as a peacekeeping organization and the mixed results of the West's peacekeeping activities in the immediate post–Cold War period. He states, for example, that the multilateralism witnessed during this period, such as in the form of UN and NATO peacekeeping operations, was à la carte and selective. This multilateralism was based more often on the national interests of Security Council members than on any real sense of internationalism or moral activism.

Perhaps the volume's most significant and relevant findings lie in response to the prescriptive question he asks in its concluding chapter: how can the international community enhance its sense of solidarity and responsibility—and amplify the international rule of law—so that early and effective multilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions might be encouraged in the future? In response to this question, Coicaud makes a number of highly informed recommendations, many of which relate directly to the United States. As he argues, "The difficulty for U.S. multilateral relations is that the superpower status of America generates a disequilibrium that encourages the United States to focus on national interest at the expense of the socially principled dimension of multilateralism." With this understanding—and with the understanding that morality has never trumped the national interest as the animating force of any Western democracy's foreign policy—he appeals for a reframing and reformulating of the U.S. national interest to make it more inclusive.

While such an appeal may have the veneer of utopianism, it is an imminently pragmatic one that should resonate with realists and liberal institutionalists. After all, when accounting for the world's new threats and challenges—the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the growing spread of deadly pathogens, and the rising number of virulent societies—the United States has a vested national interest in the internal affairs of most every country, however remote from its borders or traditional spheres of influence. These factors provide ample motivation for the development of positive international bonds. Indeed, given the many troubled societies around the globe, the United States' response to them in concert with other Western countries would go beyond a sense of noblesse oblige to a recognition of national interest. Its effort to right these societies would be an effort to protect itself—the defining element of all national interests—in an increasingly globalized and dangerous world.

With its unsparing account of UN Security Council decision making in multilateral peace operations and its astute lessons and recommenda-

tions for projecting international solidarity and responsibility, *Beyond the National Interest* will be read and debated by students, scholars, and policymakers alike. Recent USIP volumes that explore related themes include Michael J. Matheson's *Council Unbound: The Growth of UN Decision Making on Conflict and Postconflict Issues after the Cold War,* Teresa Whitfield's *Friends Indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict,* and the Institute's congressionally mandated United Nations Task Force report, *American Interests and UN Reform.* As *Beyond the National Interest* and these volumes attest, today the greatest hope for moral leadership and multilateral action in the international realm—that is, for uniting all of humanity behind a shared conception of global interest, as Reagan's "fantasy" would have it—resides with the democratic power of the United States and with the world's broader community of democracies.

Richard H. Solomon, President
United States Institute of Peace

# Acknowledgments

Two institutions have played a critical role in making this book possible: the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., and the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo.

A great deal of the work that led to this manuscript was undertaken during the time I spent as a senior fellow in the Jennings Randolph Program for International Peace at the United States Institute of Peace. At the Institute, a whole team of people contributed to making my stay a useful experience. First and foremost, I would like to thank Joseph Klaits, the director of the Jennings Randolph Program for International Peace at the time, for his kindness and support. Timothy W. Docking and Peter Pavilionis played an important role in helping shape the book. Tim, who was assigned to my project as a program officer, helped me to focus on the questions at the center of my research and provided me with encouragement throughout my twelve-month fellowship. Peter, an editor at the Institute's Press, took an interest in the enterprise from the outset; the conscientiousness with which he read the various drafts of the chapters and the critical but generous eye that he applied to my ideas and ways of presenting them contributed in no small measure to improving my thinking and writing. Other people at the Institute were instrumental in making it an ideal place for research, including Pamela Aall, John T. Crist, Chester Crocker, Ann Driscoll, Harriet Hentges, and Daniel P. Serwer. In addition, the Institute's Library staff—particularly Jim Cornelius and Ellen Ensel—and the Information Services staff were always there when I needed their help.

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and Henryk Sokalski played a significant role in sharpening my views on what the book should and could be.

Also at the Institute, Molly de Maret served as a stellar work partner, offering the best professional assistance that anyone could hope for. Molly provided tremendous help in making sure that the information on which the book is based was factually accurate. She also served as a first reader of the manuscript. Her comments and criticisms helped to improve the book.

The United Nations University—the UN think tank headquartered in Tokyo—and its staff also played an important role in making this book possible. I am particularly grateful to Hans Van Ginkel, the university's rector, and Ramesh Thakur, senior vice-rector of the university and head of its Peace and Governance Program, for allowing me to take a sabbatical from my professional duties in 2000–2001. Ramesh Thakur took an interest in the issues addressed in the book, shared his views on them, and read the draft manuscript and provided me with comments. In addition, UNU's Peace and Governance Program (in which I served as a senior academic officer from 1996 to 2003), with its focus on global issues at the crossroads of the world organization, international security, human rights, and global governance, served as the perfect setting in which to intellectually explore the ideas at the center of the book. The observations of my Peace and Governance Program colleagues helped me to keep the book intellectually on track. Soisik Habert, Lysette Rutgers, and Gareth Johnston made editorial and substantive suggestions that improved the text. The UNU Library and its rich collection on multilateral and UN issues provided precious research support. Its good-natured librarian at the time, Yoshie Hasehira, ensured that I was able to consult various documents and books in Tokyo and elsewhere in Japan. At UNU's New York office, where I currently serve, Jibecke Jönsson's feedback on the overall argument of the book was very useful. I am very grateful to her.

Some parts of the book are based on insights that I gained while working in the executive office of the UN secretary-general from 1992 to 1996. During this time, I benefited immensely from working under UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali; his chief of staff, Jean-Claude Aimé; and the entire team of the executive office of the secretary-general. Working on speechwriting at the side of Paul-Marie Coûteaux and Hervé Cassan proved to be a real learning experience.

I also wish to thank particularly some of the friends and colleagues who, at various stages of the book, took the time to exchange ideas and read various drafts. Charles A. Kupchan, a constant source of friendship,

ideas, and advice on international politics and more mundane matters, and Peter Marcotullio, an urban planner with an interest in international politics, challenged my ideas whenever they thought those ideas off target. Nicholas J. Wheeler was also kind enough to take the time to read the manuscript. His comments and suggestions helped to improve the overall thesis of the book.

The comments of two anonymous reviewers commissioned by the Institute of Peace were extremely useful. They helped to strengthen the book, and I thank them for this.

Writing a book is a celebration of life and a form of neurosis. Sometimes, the neurosis takes over the celebratory part of writing and can become more of a burden than an enjoyment to share. I am therefore grateful for my family's support and patience while I was working on the manuscript. Without Susie, in particular, to whom the book is dedicated, as well as to my parents, even the idea of this study would not have been possible.

# Preface

On December 3, 1991, I was in Vendée, in the west of France, preparing a book on political legitimacy. Harvard University, with which I was affiliated at the time, had been flexible enough to allow me to spend an academic year in the French countryside to write the manuscript. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, elected secretary-general of the United Nations the previous day, appeared on television during the lunchtime news. The journalist congratulated him on his new appointment and asked him a variety of questions on how he felt about the United Nations, the state of the world, and the issues on which he intended to focus during his tenure. Discovering for the first time the name and face of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, I found him to be a person decidedly from the Old World—courtly, classy, and intellectually sharp. I thought he would certainly be a very interesting person for whom to work.

For a few months after that first "encounter," I did not give more thought to Boutros-Ghali and the United Nations; I was too busy trying to progress with my work. Moreover, I had never really thought about working for the United Nations, let alone its secretary-general. Since my early years as a student in France and then as a young scholar at Harvard, I had set my sights on a regular academic career.

Then, in the early spring of 1992, I received a phone call from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A few years earlier, I had served as a junior officer with the cultural and scientific service of the French consulate in Houston, Texas, and I had kept in touch with some of my former colleagues from the ministry. I was now being contacted in regard to a position in the executive office of the UN secretary-general. Boutros-Ghali was in the process of staffing his cabinet and was looking for someone to join the French speechwriting unit. At the time, my knowledge of the United Nations was fairly limited, but I knew enough to realize the value of the job

and that there was probably no shortage of candidates more qualified and more eager than myself. To my surprise, and perhaps because I approached the selection process in a relaxed manner, I was offered the position a few weeks after the interview. I was now forced to make a choice: Would I stick to my initial desire for an academic career or would I take this opportunity to work for the UN secretary-general? Mainly upon the advice of my father, to whom the United Nations meant a lot, I decided to give the latter a try.

I began working in the secretary-general's executive office in mid-July 1992, just a few days after completing a solid draft of my book on political legitimacy. It was the beginning of four extremely hectic years, during which I learned a tremendous amount, not only about the United Nations and international relations, but also about the obscure workings of international politics. My position was not a senior one; I was more of a foot soldier, if not a fly on the wall, trying to as much as possible learn the job on the job, so to speak. As a junior member of the French speechwriting unit, my job entailed three main responsibilities: helping to draft speeches (in French, of course) for the secretary-general on any given topic of the day, as well as on recurrent issues on the UN agenda (mainly European and African issues); note taking during some of the secretary-general's meetings with heads of state, foreign affairs ministers, ambassadors, UN special representatives, and others, and drafting the minutes of the meetings; and taking care of the secretary-general's correspondence.

Typically, a day would begin with reading the confidential cables. Circulated every morning to the professionals in the executive office, the cables came from the field, where the United Nations was deployed mainly in the context of peacekeeping operations, and gave the latest updates on the security, political, social, and economic situation "on the ground." The day would then unfold, filled up with preparing upcoming speeches (doing research, consulting in-house experts, and drafting), attending the secretary-general's meetings, or writing up the minutes of previous meetings. The weeks and days preceding a trip by the secretary-general were particularly busy, ensuring that all the speeches for the trip were ready and approved well before departure. Driven, demanding, and attentive to detail as Boutros Boutros-Ghali was, it was out of the question to leave things to the last minute.

Autumn was a time of especially intense activity. With the UN General Assembly in session and officials attending from around the world, the daily schedules of the secretary-general and his cabinet were filled for weeks at a time with meetings from morning to evening. After the opening of the General Assembly, the second half of September was generally dedicated to

meetings between the secretary-general and heads of state and foreign affairs ministers at the United Nations to deliver their yearly addresses to the General Assembly—speeches that traditionally outline the position of the respective governments on perennial items as well as current issues on the UN agenda. The meetings took place either in the secretary-general's office, in the conference room on the thirty-eighth floor of the New York headquarters building, or in the small consultation rooms located just behind the General Assembly hall. October and November were dedicated to following the work of the various committees associated with the work of the General Assembly in session.

The frantic schedule of the UN Security Council and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) during my years in the office of the secretary-general made the daily work all the more intense. With the multiplication and increased complexity of peacekeeping operations, the Security Council and DPKO—whose mission is to monitor the UN operations deployed in areas of conflict—had become the busiest entities of the entire UN Secretariat. Both were round-the-clock operations, with the Council having informal consultations almost every day, and the DPKO linked with field missions twenty-four hours a day through its crisis management situation center (this was before the use of e-mail between headquarters and the field). The pressure under which the Security Council and the DPKO found themselves trickled down to the secretary-general's cabinet, including the speechwriting units. As the Council deliberated and decided on a multiplicity of peace operations involving not only interposition and the search for solutions to conflicts but also humanitarian aid and at times the use of force, it fell to the DPKO and, to a certain extent, the executive office to feed the decision makers in the Council with the secretary-general's reports assessing the situation on the ground and making recommendations.

The speechwriting unit had to deal with questions that had been the staples of the United Nations' work for decades, such as disarmament, poverty and development, and human rights. But it also had to address the specific crises of the period—humanitarian tragedies that came to define the 1990s and the role of the United Nations and multilateralism at the time. In one way or another, the Balkans, Somalia, and Rwanda became constant features of the work. As these crises and their multilateral handling unfolded, the goal was to give as honest and clear a voice as possible to the secretary-general—one that would factor in the various aspects of the situation without losing sight of the need to take a stance on the right course of action. Placing humanitarian crises onto the agenda

of the Security Council was a novelty in the United Nations then, and considering the misgivings of key member states about the extent to which they and the United Nations should get involved in these crises, the support role for Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali was more than a bit of a challenge.

At the same time, with perhaps the exception of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for most of the UN Secretariat the crises of the period appeared astonishingly distant. That was certainly the case for the executive office of the secretary-general. I remember quite well the spring of 1994, when the genocide was in full swing in Rwanda, how the mass killing of Tutsis and moderate Hutus seemed a rather abstract phenomenon from the thirty-eighth floor of UN headquarters in Manhattan. The same sense of detachment was more or less on display in July 1995, during the siege and takeover of Srebrenica. On both occasions, judging by the atmosphere of quiet concentration prevailing in the corridor of the thirty-eighth floor, one would not have guessed that people were being slaughtered by the tens of thousands on the United Nations' watch.

When I left the executive office of the secretary-general in the early summer of 1996 and, a few weeks later, moved to Tokyo to take a new job with the United Nations University (UNU), I had learned a vast amount about the United Nations, multilateralism, international politics, and the issues of the period. Among other things, I learned how precious it can be to see how international organizations work from within. To witness the decision-making process in a politically and normatively complex environment such as the United Nations' was both a humanly humbling and intellectually enriching experience. Books are certainly an essential medium for learning how the world and its institutions function, but they cannot substitute for firsthand experience. Any analyst-scholar who is eager to understand the constraints and possibilities of political decision making, who is committed to comprehending the institutional and political constraints at play—let alone to go beyond them and try to advance a progressive and hopeful international agenda—will be well advised to get this kind of exposure. In particular, this experience led me to believe that, when the possibility exists of studying an institution from within, doing so and eventually combining that perspective with a view from afar is essential.

This does not mean that I knew all that much when I left Boutros-Ghali's cabinet. In fact, while working in the executive office, caught up in daily tasks, it was difficult to reflect on the crises that seemed to unfold with a disturbing regularity and the ways the international community handled them. This state of affairs, both challenging and frustrating, was

not conducive to thinking through the role of the United Nations in international affairs, particularly regarding a theme that had caught my interest while working on the thirty-eighth floor—the extent and limits of the sense of international solidarity and responsibility for this new kind of mass violence in the immediate post–Cold War period.

My position with the United Nations University, geared more toward policy research, gave me the opportunity to revisit the issues to which I had been introduced in speechwriting for Boutros-Ghali. In the various research projects that I was responsible for in UNU's Peace and Governance Program, I made a point of trying to elucidate some of the intellectual and political puzzles that I had been exposed to in the previous years. A senior fellowship with the United States Institute of Peace in 2000–2001 gave me the opportunity to turn what had up to then been insights and analyses dispersed in various publications into a more systematic and comprehensive approach. As I was writing the draft of the current work, the international changes that began to take place in the 2000s, far from relegating the questions at the center of my research into the past, made it all the more important to explore further the global role of multilateralism and the United Nations. September 11, 2001, the Bush administration's unilateralist foreign policy and its War on Terror, the war in Iraq, and their still unforeseeable long-term consequences gave a renewed sense of relevance and urgency to the project.

This book is the product of a personal, professional, and intellectual journey with the United Nations. As such, it has to be seen as an exercise of clarification, as a modest attempt to better understand the world and the way it has been managed since the 1990s.

# BEYOND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

"Though men, therefore, generally direct everything according to their own lust, nevertheless, more advantages than disadvantages follow from their forming a common society. So it is better to bear men's wrongs calmly, and apply one's zeal to those things which help to bring men together in harmony and friendship."

Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part IV, Appendix XIV

"The price of greatness is responsibility. . . . [O]ne cannot rise to be . . . the leading community in the . . . world without being involved in its problems, without being convulsed by its agonies and inspired by its causes. If this has been proved in the past, as it has been, it will become indisputable in the future."

Winston Churchill
Address delivered at Harvard University,
September 6, 1943