

a higher profile in U.S. national security considerations than ever before.

Hence the absurdity of Clinton's exhorting the U.N. to prepare for more intervention when he has failed to deliver on his four-year-old promise to pay most of Washington's back dues. According to U.N. budget chief Joseph Connor, the United States is responsible for more than half of the world's \$3.24 billion total in U.N. arrears. "The United States said, 'Show reform and we will pay,'" Connor complained during the Millennium Assembly. "We showed reform. [The money's] not there." With the United States still refusing to pay, other nations, including long-compliant members such as Japan, are increasingly reluctant to pick up the tab.

And hence one should be realistic about the prospects for U.N. peacekeeping. The United States, as the world's sole superpower, has a greater stake in a peaceful global system than any other country. If Washington is not going to do more for the U.N. now—at a time of unprecedented U.S. prosperity and a record budget surplus, and at a moment when not a single American soldier risks wearing a U.N. blue helmet anywhere in the world—it is unlikely to any time soon. Nor is it likely that Washington will prove any more willing to take on a regular role as the U.N.'s "subcontractor"—as it has only twice before, in Korea and Kuwait, when it mustered multinational forces under the U.N. banner. This is especially true after Kosovo, which set a zero-casualty threshold for U.S.-led humanitarian intervention.

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Yet this does not mean that the impulse for humanitarian intervention is going to wither away along with the U.N. budget.

Whether Washington likes it or not, interventions are here to stay. They will go on in their haphazard way, with the biggest headlines and the most horrific TV footage typically drawing the biggest efforts, even as academics and experts parse various "rules" for when America and other major powers should jump in—as if such fastidious guidelines carried any weight against the "CNN effect."

Old-fashioned proponents of *realpolitik* who reject the quixotism of humanitarian intervention—or who, like the writer Edward Luttwak, simply advise us to await the peace that comes once combatants have exhausted their bloodlust—only betray their remoteness from and ignorance of the pressures put on elected officials in the era of "superempowered" democracy (which usually means a superempowered media). It may well be, as Luttwak argues, that humanitarian interventions "artificially freeze conflict." But in a globalized world dominated by Western mores, people do not really care about that. They simply do not want to see slaughter on their TV screens. Egged on by the ever-multiplying hordes of pundits, they will usually demand that their governments do something about it—usually something fast and easy. We live in a world defined by Wilsonian idealism, as even Henry Kissinger has grudgingly admitted. *The New Republic's* Leon Wieseltier, writing during the Kosovo war, solemnly summed up the popular sentiment: any "place in which innocent men, women, and children are being expelled and exterminated is an important place. It is a place that asks about the philosophy by which we claim to live."

So intervention will continue. But if we stick to the present system, this intervention