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USA POLICY TOWARDS UNITED NATIONS: THE CASE OF UN PKOS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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Abstract. *Introduction.* This article examines United States policy towards United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKOs) by analyzing the U.S. position towards peacekeeping operations in the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC) to trace the evolution and specific features of this policy over time. The article attempts to answer the question: is U.S. policy toward UN PKOs defined by only national interest, or is there more to it? *Methods and materials.* The article analyzes U.S. official speeches and documents, UN official documents related to peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, American foreign policy doctrines, and academic literature on U.S. foreign policy, U.S.-UN relations, and UN PKOs in the DRC. *Analysis.* American policy towards UN peacekeeping operations in Congo in 1960–1964 and 1999–2022 is analyzed to identify the main trends in the USA's approach toward UN PKOs. *Results.* The article concludes that U.S. policy towards the United Nations is defined by the combination of the national interest of the country and the ideas of American exceptionalism. *Authors' contributions.* D. Pushkina defined the research focus of the article, examined academic literature on UN PKOs in Congo and relevant documents, and defined the main vectors of the research. R. Kalina examined academic literature about U.S.-UN relations, analyzed official U.S. statements on UN peacekeeping operations in Congo, and made conclusions.

Key words: American foreign policy, United Nations, UN peacekeeping, U.S.-UN relations, UN PKOs in Democratic Republic of Congo.

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ПОЛИТИКА США В ОТНОШЕНИИ ООН: КЕЙС МИРОТВОРЧЕСКИХ МИССИЙ ООН В ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКЕ КОНГО

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Аннотация. Политика США по отношению к миротворческим операциям ООН менялась в течение существования организации. В данной статье анализируется политика США по отношению к миротворчеству ООН на примере миротворческих операций в Демократической Республике Конго. Рассматриваются официальные речи представителей США, официальные документы ООН касательно миротворческой опера-

ции в Конго, академическая литература про отношения США и ООН и миротворческие операции в Конго. Американская политика по отношению к миротворческим операциям ООН в Конго в 1960–1964 гг. и 1999–2022 гг. проанализирована, чтобы выявить основные тенденции в американском подходе к миротворческим операциям ООН. В статье сделан вывод, что американская политика по отношению к ООН определяется комбинацией национальных интересов страны и идеями американской исключительности. *Вклад авторов.* Д.Б. Пушкина сформировала исследовательский вектор статьи, проанализировала литературу и официальные документы ООН по отношению к миротворческой операции в Конго, определила методологию исследования. Р.В. Калина проанализировала литературу об отношениях США и ООН, официальные заявления представителей США касательно миротворческих операций ООН в Конго.

Ключевые слова: внешняя политика США, Организация Объединенных Наций, операции ООН по поддержанию мира, отношения США и ООН, миротворческие операции ООН в Демократической республике Конго.

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Introduction. This article analyzes the United States' policy towards United Nations peacekeeping operations (UN PKOs) using the example of UN PKOs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The case of DRC can help to trace the developments in American policy towards UN peacekeeping because the war outbreaks in DRC in the 1960s and 1990–2010s are tightly linked with the history of the UN PKOs during both the Cold War and the post-Cold War periods.

The academic debate investigates the complexity of the relationship between the USA and the United Nations. Many researchers tend to define the relationship between two international actors as unequal. They point out two things: the ambiguity of U.S. policy towards the UN and the hegemony of the U.S. on the global stage. Cronin, for example, writes that promoting the development of the UN as an international organization was crucial for the hegemonic nature of the U.S. presence in world politics [8]. With time, the United Nations started to reflect American principles in its work and structure. Puchala states that U.S. hegemony in the United Nations started even before the end of the Cold War. He claims it happened at the end of World War II and that the United Nations was an American creation [29]. The U.S. has been using its power to control the United Nations and promote its national interest in the organization. With regards to UN PKOs in Congo, Dean, an American diplomat, said in 1963, "Throughout most of the three years [of Congo operation], the UN acted as an agent of the U.S." [17]. Yet other

scholars find another pattern. For instance, Cohen claims that the creation of the United Nations showed the U.S. how to act following their interests but also be conscious of world politics and more responsive to it [7]. As an example of this point of view, scholars point out that during the first Peacekeeping Operation in Congo, ONUC, USA favored the UN PKO mission rather than the American troops' intervention [27].

Researchers claim that the cooperation between the USA and the UN is about the costs and benefits, and the approach the U.S. has towards the organization is pragmatic [19, p. 31]. Peacekeeping Operations in the Congo can illustrate the United States' evaluation of UN peacekeeping activity at various times. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, with several decades of UN interference, caused a plethora of views from the U.S. presidential administration offices when each newly elected president modified the U.S. attitude towards UN intergovernmental cooperation in global peace promotion. Our previous research analyzed USA policy towards UN PKOs in post-Cold War administrations [30]. The current paper analyzes academic literature and U.S. officials' public statements to better understand the American approach toward UN PKOs, looking at the Cold War and post-Cold War periods.

Methods and materials. This article analyzes U.S. and UN official documents, as well as statements from public officials and academic literature. The study examines the official statements from United States politicians towards UN PKOs and specifically UN PKOs in Congo

in the years 1960–1964 (Cold War) and 1990–2022 (post-Cold War) to highlight the main trends of the American approach to UN Peacekeeping Operations. Time selection emanates from the ‘Most Different Design Approach’. There is a difference in US foreign policy between the 1960s (the Cold War climax, the Vietnam War, etc.) and the 1990s (the era of US ‘triumphalism’). Yet, it is still interesting to look at the above-mentioned periods through the prism of UNPKO in Congo to find the very patterns of the US attitude toward United Nations peacekeeping. The authors provided a historical overview of the situation in Congo and the USA’s involvement in peacekeeping operations in the country. The analysis of official statements and academic literature on the topic helped to highlight the pivotal moments in the U.S. approach toward UN PKOs.

Analysis. Congo was a Belgian colony between 1908 and 1960, although de facto colonial rule had existed since the declaration of the “Congo Free State” in 1885 under King Leopold II of Belgium. Congo is rich in natural resources such as gold, diamonds, coltan, copper, coal, and uranium. Most exploitable mineral resources are located in the south, especially in the Katanga (now Shaba) province [13]. Belgium granted Congo independence in 1960, a decision stimulated by armed clashes and rioting against the colonial administration. Regional political leaders worked out a power-sharing arrangement, and as a result, there was a compromise between two rival leaders: Joseph Kasavubu became the President of the Republic and Patrice Lumumba the Prime Minister [34].

Following independence, there was a rebellion within the Congolese Army Force Publique (known after independence as *Armée Nationale Congolaise*, or ANC), due to dissatisfaction with the continued presence of Belgian officers and citizens within the country’s military and political structures. At the same time, with the support of Belgium, several regions declared their independence from the country. Central government forces mobilized to prevent these secessions from occurring. On July 11th, 1960, just before the UN’s arrival to oversee Belgian withdrawal, regional leader Tshombe, perceived as ‘pro-Western’ by both the USA and USSR, declared Katanga province independent, requested mobilization to resist UN forces, and

refused to negotiate [13, p. 318]. Another Congo province, South Kasai, demanded full autonomy soon afterward.

The United Nations Operation in the Congo, or ONUC, was established in July of 1960 and mandated to oversee the withdrawal of Belgian forces and assist the new government in maintaining law and order [35]. The mission was subsequently mandated to focus more on preventing civil war and maintaining the territorial sovereignty of the Congo. Such missions were rare, as there were extreme difficulties in maintaining them [10].

The USA and USSR voted in favor of the mission; however, with time, their positions regarding the operation and peacekeeping in general changed. The Congo turned into the first hotspot on the African continent after the decolonization period. Opposite sides of the Cold War crisis had their interest in the country: it had a good geographical position in the middle of Africa, and the country’s natural resources and minerals made it very attractive to foreign powers. “Western perceptions of both the Congo’s intrinsic value, stemming from its mineral wealth, and the country’s vulnerability to Communist pressure made the country both an open and covert Cold War battleground” [13, p. 319]. The U.S. President Eisenhower and the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev, tried to use the crisis in their favor. Eisenhower was aiming at protecting the interests of the West with the help of the United Nations without necessarily using American resources for it. For Khrushchev, the UN operation was an opportunity to influence the events in Congo to increase Soviet influence in Africa and support Prime Minister Lumumba. Lumumba hoped for the help of military operations to unite the country again [25]. UN forces began deployment in 1960 amid civil war and attempts by Lumumba (with the help of the USSR) to implement peace. In December 1960, Khrushchev criticized the mission: he accused the United Nations and its Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, of bias towards Lumumba and even suggested reforming the United Nations, by abolishing the position of Secretary General and replacing it with a troika system. His proposal was rejected [23]. The Congolese crisis was seen as a dangerous front in the Cold War and could potentially lead to

escalation between the USA and USSR. At the time, US policy towards Congo was dominated by the domino theory, which argued that if Communist influence took place in one country, it would spread to others. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, G. Mennen Williams, testifying before a closed hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in early 1961, stated that if the US pulled out of Congo at the time, the USSR would soon control the whole of Africa [13, p. 322]. George McGhee, an Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, confirmed it in his 1990 interview, saying that Kennedy treated the USSR as an enemy in the Congo [25].

The United States, thus, viewed its participation in the UN PKO in the Congo as a way to increase its power in Africa. As a result, the United States provided half of the finances for the PKO mission, most of the airlift, and overall, the US contribution to ONUC's covered about 48% of the military and about 71% of the UN civilian operations [13, p. 331]. However, the United States also manipulated the rival Congolese factions, their outside supporters, and the UN and "mounted covert operations" [13, p. 322]. Domestically in the USA, there were disagreements within the State Department, the Congress, and the media's influencers of public opinion about "African nationalism, the role of Communist influence in the region, and the relative importance of good relations with Third World countries when that goal clashed with traditional relations with the NATO allies, several of whom retained colonial empires" [13, p. 323].

The American leadership kept providing support to the UN Peacekeeping Operation in the Congo, while the Soviet Union criticized the involvement of the UN in the internal conflict in the Congo and tried to reform the structure of the United Nations alongside it. US President Dwight Eisenhower defended UN involvement in the Congo during the UN General Assembly in 1960. He claimed that "criticism directed by these nations against the Secretary General <...> is nothing less than a direct attack upon the United Nations itself" [2]. Eisenhower's successor, John F. Kennedy, addressed the failed attempt of the Soviet Union's reform of the UN at the UN General Assembly in 1963, highlighting again the importance of U.S. support for the operation [3]. Dean Rusk, who was Secretary of State during

Kennedy's presidency, in 1961 asked for a stronger mandate for the UN, showing again the interest of the U.S. in UN involvement in the conflict [24].

The rivalry between the USA and USSR was not the only reason why the U.S. supported ONUC. The post-colonial nature of the conflict in the Congo and, hence, the presence of Belgian armed forces in the country, influenced the decision-making of the United States. With Belgium being a NATO member state, the American administration did not want any confrontation between UN troops and the Belgians. In a way, the U.S. tried to be in contact with many sides involved in the conflict but acted according to their national interests. In some situations, during ONUC, the national interest of the U.S. prevailed over the interest in resolving the conflict in Congo, and it influenced the UN Peacekeeping Operation as well. Eisenhower's administration was interested in its loyalty to the NATO alliance and "sought to protect European interests, save Europeans from humiliation, and to block Communist designs" [28]. The approach of Kennedy's administration was also directed at fighting Communist ideas and Soviet influence.

The United States provided substantial financial and military support to the ONUC. When some other states, including the USSR and France, refused to support the continuation of the operation, the U.S. provided a significant portion of funding. When Lumumba was assassinated in Katanga province, the conflict severely worsened. According to declassified documents, the CIA initiated operations aimed at destabilizing Lumumba [17]. The role of the USA in the destabilizing situation in Congo by the assassination of Lumumba demonstrated how the USA could put its interests over cooperation with the United Nations. Moreover, the U.S. began to support rivals who were fighting for control of the Congo, while US official support for UN PKOs continued. ONUC was authorized to use force to end Katanga's secession. In July 1961, ONUC's maximum strength consisted of 19,828 military personnel and was supported by international civilian and locally recruited staff [4]. Such numerous troop missions were unusual for the Cold War period. The mission was one of the few during the Cold War to be deployed in an internal armed conflict with an enforcement mandate, as during

the Cold War period, peace operations mostly performed cease-fire monitoring. It was possible due to the initial consensus within the Security Council regarding the mission. It was also the most ambitious and costly of the United Nations missions during the Cold War [4].

There are debates within the academic literature regarding the success of the mission. Partially, the mission fulfilled its mandate, but some critics see it as a failure [18]. This paper concurs that the successes included the removal of Belgian forces, the eventual establishment of the territorial integrity of the country, and the removal of all non-UN military and paramilitary personnel from the country. However, ONUC witnessed several major cease-fire violations, and many civilian casualties occurred during the mission. There were large outflows of refugees, with hundreds of thousands fleeing from the South Kasai region. This aspect significantly contributed to the conclusion that the Congo conflict destabilized regional security. In February of 1963, when the mission did succeed in reintegrating Katanga into the national territory of the Congo, the UN began its withdrawal.

The example of UN PKO in Congo demonstrates that U.S. involvement in the operation in Congo followed the national interest of the country: it opposed the Soviet Union on a geopolitical level and supported anti-communist and anti-Soviet regimes in countries across the globe, including Congo. Involvement in the UN PKOs was another way to gain support from the organization and to support and influence third countries around the globe. ONUC also showed that the U.S. was willing to put NATO allies interests above the United Nations.

One of the reasons why the United States followed its national interests can be the idea of American exceptionalism. As defined by different researchers, exceptionalism is “any collective ideas asserting that a certain community (imagined or not) deviates from the norms typical of all other similar communities, due to the special features it possesses” [1]. In the case of the United States, the idea of their exceptionalism includes belief in the uniqueness of the American political system and historical development. We can see the belief in American uniqueness in the USA’s relationship with the United Nations. While the U.S. gained support from the UN, there were instances when

it did not follow UN orders and chose to act within its interests. While the ONUC mission was clearly not a successful peacekeeping operation, it was declared by American officials, such as Harlan Cleveland, then US Assistant Secretary of State for International Affairs, to be better than any alternatives (meaning growing Soviet influence in the region) [13, p. 345]. Following the end of the UN PKO involvement, the United States supported militarily and economically the dictatorship regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled the country while ignoring its political, economic, and social problems, which, in turn, contributed to the outbreak of conflict in the region again in the 1990s [15, p. 231]. The fact that Congo in the 1960s became a case of Cold War rivalry contributed to the fact that there was reluctance among UNSC permanents in the 1990s to engage in the region again [15, p. 230]. ONUC “created an acute political and financial crisis that scarred the Organization for a long time” [13]. This United Nations operation in Congo became one of the most difficult ones for UN Peacekeeping [25]. The renewal of instability and the beginning of a new war in the 1990s led to further doubt about the success of the original peacekeeping mission, which used an enforcement mandate to guarantee the unity of the country rather than develop a cohesive peace plan for the country’s prolonged peace and prosperity. The latter part was arguably not feasible given the USA’s support of the rival factions.

In the post-Cold War period, there has been a noticeable change in the USA’s approach to the UN in general and peacekeeping operations in particular, with almost every new administration in office. The approach to the United Nations can be described as fluctuating; it goes from close cooperation and financing to a far more distant relationship.

In the 1990s, the UN drastically increased the number of operations. It also evolved from traditional cease-fire missions to encompass peacebuilding, which added additional dimensions to peacekeeping operations [9]. With the end of the Cold War, the USA considered itself the only remaining superpower, and in its latter years, the President G.H.W. Bush administration drafted a US policy towards UN peacekeeping operations [14, pp. 35-36]. In September 1992, President Bush stated in his speech to the UN General Assembly that the

USA was ready to strengthen the world's peace by strengthening international peacekeeping [14, p. 37]. Domestically, there was disagreement both within Congress and within military command regarding the degree to which the US should participate in UN PKOs [14, p. 38]. National Security Decision Directive 74 issued by President Bush stated that UN capability for peacekeeping should be strengthened and the participation of US forces considered only if their 'unique' military capabilities were necessary for the success of UN PKO [14, p. 39]. President Clinton's administration aimed to create a comprehensive US policy towards UN peacekeeping operations, issuing Presidential Review Directive 13.

Many members of Clinton's administration were initially in favor of stronger US support for UN PKOs, as they also considered greater UN involvement in world peace to be a certain burden relief for the United States. For example, Ambassador Albright stated to Congress in 1993 that peacekeeping would be instrumental in 'meeting three fundamental imperatives of our national interest: economic, political and humanitarian' [14, p. 41]. However, there was also considerable skepticism in the USA about American involvement in UN PKOs, particularly among US military command: having only extremely limited engagement with PKOs in the past, US military tended to view the organization missions with suspicion [14, p. 41]. It was combined with the fact that the UN missions in Bosnia, Somalia, and Cambodia were running into substantial difficulties. The opposition to US active involvement in the UN PKOs within the United States was represented, for example, by the former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who stated that Clinton's administration failed to relate the use of US military troops to a concept of the national interest [14, p. 50].

Due to the mounting domestic opposition to the increased US participation in the UN PKO's, the Clinton administration started to adopt a more critical stand towards US participation in UN PKOs' than it initially announced. The important defining point came in October 1993, when U.S. troops were killed in the Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia. This resulted in the Clinton administration's withdrawal from strong cooperation with the United Nations PKOs [14,

p. 49]. The U.S. still supported the organization financially, but cooperation in other spheres, including the provision of troops, was significantly lowered. During this time, American interests became more central and separate from concepts of broader, global interests.

President Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25) in 1994. The directive stated that the UN PKOs might be supported and US participation in them might be considered if the operation advances US interests, domestic / congressional support exists, and unique / general risks to US troops are acceptable [14, p. 58].

Another pivotal turning point happened during George W. Bush's administration. This change was a direct impact of 9/11 and the Iraq War. In the beginning of the George W. Bush Presidency, the administration was quite ambivalent towards the United Nations. After 9/11, there was a major shift in the approach: Bush's administration started pushing toward peace operations and increased the UN budget [20]. Obama's administration was also in favor of cooperation with the United Nations. Aside from personally attending the UN General Assembly and giving multiple speeches there, his administration attempted to reform the UN to increase the organization's efficiency and to have a more inclusive approach to the Security Council. Under Obama, the United States continued to be the largest financial contributor to the UN budget. A significant number of contributions by the U.S. went to peacekeeping accounts at the UN. Concerning peacekeeping, Obama's administration tried to review the way peacekeeping operations were structured, paying significant attention to the countries that contribute the most to PKOs in terms of personnel [5].

The situation changed with the Trump administration. President Trump has been very critical of the United Nations since his presidential campaign. The nature of his "America First" policy was skepticism toward multilateral cooperation. Such policy resulted in a refusal to fund and participate in the United Nations and withdrawal from multiple UN institutions. In terms of peacekeeping, Trump's administration was cutting the budget directed to PKOs as well as the general budget for the United Nations. The current American President Biden promised that the United States would be more involved in world politics and United Nations processes, including

the increase in participation in peacekeeping operations [31], but the administration's priorities have mostly been directed towards other issues.

The dynamics of US policy towards UN PKOs can be traced in the case of the DRC. In the 1990s, Congo became embroiled in conflict again due to its domestic economic, social, and political problems (ignored by the Mobutu regime), but also, to a large degree, to its role in the 1994 Rwandan Civil War. In the aftermath of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, the Hutu militias of Interahamwe, fearing retaliation for their attacks on Tutsis in Rwanda, fled to neighboring Zaire (the Democratic Republic of Congo bore the name of Zaire between 1971 and 1997). The Hutus set up camps in the North and South Kivu in eastern Zaire and began attacking Congolese Tutsis, which resulted in the latter fearing another Rwanda-like genocide. Rwanda's President Paul Kagame formed a coalition with Uganda's leader Yoweri Museveni and sent several armed units to South Kivu to support the Congolese Tutsis and to remove the Hutu camps from the Zaire-Rwandan border. The conflict became a regional one, with several countries involved and several insurgent groups fighting. Zaire's President Mobutu's army refused to fight back and fled. With encouragement from Rwanda and Uganda, Congolese Laurent Kabila created the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, and on March 16th, 1997, Kabila forced Mobutu to resign, assumed the Congolese Presidency, and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the regional and domestic conflict continued. In 2001, Laurent Kabila was assassinated, and his son, Joseph Kabila, took over power. Joseph Kabila called for multilateral peace talks and welcomed the UN PKO mission. The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement that was signed in July 1999 between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe allowed the UN Security Council to authorize the deployment of the United Nations PKO [37]. Initially, the mission had a mandate for the observation of the ceasefire and disengagement of its forces, as well as to be a liaison between all parties to the Ceasefire Agreement. The limitations of the mandate were due largely to the fact that missions with more expanded mandates are more expensive, and "the

more expensive the mission, the more reluctant the United States and other permanent members of the UN Security Council are to authorize or expand it" [15, p. 301].

Richard Holbrook, US ambassador to the United Nations, spoke in favor of initiating UN PKO in Congo but insisted that the USA would delay deployment of any mission until warring parties respect the cease-fire. Together with other American politicians, he visited several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola, stressing the importance of stopping violence [15, p. 250]. In expressing their opinions to the Security Council in the following consultations, African countries called for a very robust peacekeeping force, and France was also in favor of a quick, strong enforcement mission. These opinions, however, were not in accordance with what the U.S. administration envisioned [15, p. 250]. Besides, there was some domestic opposition in the U.S. Congress to funding the UN PKO mission, considering ongoing UN missions in Kosovo and East Timor [15, p. 251]. The Clinton administration argued that the mission would not involve any U.S. troops and should necessarily involve cooperation from the warring parties; thus, the USA proposed Resolution 1291 with a minimalist approach to the conflict, which frustrated African countries [15, p. 251].

According to the analysis of several American scholars, even though the USA took the lead on Resolution 1291, American political support for the MONUC mission would weaken over time. The non-implementation of peace agreements by the warring parties undermined the United States' interest in the area. In its first years in office, the Bush administration did not focus on MONUC until William Lacy Swing was appointed as the Secretary-General's special representative in the DRC in May 2003. Swing was a former U.S. ambassador to the country, well connected to the State Department, and his leadership of the mission allowed him to secure more support from the United States [15, p. 253]. The Security Council expanded the mandate to include the supervision of the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement and several other related tasks [38]. MONUC's maximum strength was 22,016 total uniformed personnel [39]. In spring 2003, the SC agreed to enforcement measures (authorizing a French-led European Union force).

Although MONUC contributed somewhat to conflict management in the DRC, overall, the mission largely failed to stop the war in the country. The numerous expansions of the MONUC mandate reflect the complexity of the challenges within the country, which required military peace enforcement, national state-building, and regional diplomatic efforts at the same time. While there was no direct spread of conflict, there was serious destabilization of regional security: neighboring countries' armies (Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola) and militant groups were involved in the DRC war. Parties to the conflict were also involved in other regional conflicts [21]. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was claimed to be "one of the most intervened countries in the world" [32]. To the mission's credit, MONUC partially contributed to the withdrawal of most foreign forces from the DRC. A significant failure of the mission lies in failing to protect civilians even with the peace-enforcement mandate.

By June 2010, the UN reported that there had been improvements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: relative stability has been achieved in the western DRC, relations with neighboring states have improved, several rebel leaders (such as Laurent Nkunda) have been captured, Interhamwe FDLR rebels have been defeated, and some demobilization and disarmament have been conducted. The UN reports also noted some progress in building new institutions [41]. However, many problems remained: persistent fighting, violence against civilians, "the illegal exploitation of natural resources; inter-communal tensions compounded by population movements between the Democratic Republic of Congo, primarily North Kivu, and Rwanda; and the root causes of the instability in the area, including the limited presence of State authority" [40]. As a result, MONUC has been widely characterized as a failed mission [11]. By 2004, the realization of the lack of significant progress in MONUC, serious domestic disagreements within the Congress about supporting funding for the mission, and the accusations of the UN peacekeepers of breaking international and domestic law began to significantly erode U.S. support for the UN PKOs in general and the mission in Congo in particular [15, p. 254].

In July 2010, UNSC initiated a United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO). To combat groups such as M23, a rebel military group, in March 2013, the UNSC authorized the deployment of a force intervention brigade (FIB) within MONUSCO "to conduct offensive operations against M23 and other armed groups within eastern DRC" [36]. The main purpose of FIB was "to eliminate threats to the DRC government, improve civilian security and create conditions for post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization." In July 2013, the UN Intervention Brigade of 3,000 military personnel was deployed to the DRC, thus creating a new and unprecedented initiative in UN enforcement measures. The maximum authorized troop size was 20,000, with the authorization to use enforcement even without the consent of the Congolese government. Traditionally, UN peacekeepers are equipped with light weapons intended for use in self-defense, but the FIB has mortal weapons, snipers, heavy artillery, attack helicopters, and drones [22].

MONUSCO, with about 20,000 personnel, including 18,000 military personnel, has proceeded to tackle many of the same mandates as its predecessor [26]. However, rebel forces continue to fight each other, and government forces, civilians, and peacekeepers are being targeted. One of the ongoing problems, according to the UN reports, is the control of the militants over the rich mineral resources in the area, such as coltan. Coltan is very demanded in the world market (it is vital for the production of mobile phones and other expensive electronic devices), and revenue from selling it helps fund militant groups. In addition, a resurgence of Ebola and the COVID-19 pandemic challenge the nation. At present, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the most failed states in the world [16]. Despite the long-term commitment of the United Nations peacekeepers and peace enforcement mandates of the missions, the inability to prevent ongoing violence reflects the overall failure of the missions.

The example of the Democratic Republic of the Congo allows us to monitor American government policy toward the United Nations PKOs. Clinton's administration promised to work more closely with the UN toward solving the crises in Africa, including the Congo [6].

However, the USA refused to send troops to the continent to support peacekeeping operations, especially after the tragic event in Somalia. The Bush administration, after 9/11/2001, supported the UN PKO in the DRC, but its backing faded over time, especially when the allegations of UN peacekeepers committing crimes became public. Obama's administration was also involved in solving this conflict. Hillary Clinton, a secretary of state at the time, personally visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo and called attention to the region's ongoing conflict [33]. Moreover, Barack Obama said that the U.S. is "prepared to work with the United Nations, regional organizations and others to help him (Joseph Kabila, the DRC president from 2001 to 2019) build capacity". Donald Trump's election signified another change in U.S.-UN cooperation, this time more drastic than previously. While his predecessors might not have been strongly supportive of the organization, his term was defined by a retreat from globalization and a reduction of financial contributions to international organizations [9]. Trump's administration lessened the U.S. involvement in UN Peacekeeping Operations, reducing their support for MONUSCO. Haley claimed that the UN mission was "aiding a government that is inflicting predatory behavior against its own people" [12]. President Biden pledged more cooperation with the UN PKOs while entering office, yet his administration has defined different foreign policy priorities so far.

Given the above, since the end of the Cold War, the United States has tried different approaches toward UN Peacekeeping Operations. The relationship between the U.S. and the UN has changed more than once since the Cold War ended. Under Clinton's administration, the U.S. initially increased but later decreased its participation in UN processes, including peacekeeping operations. After 9/11 and the beginning of the Iraq War, the attitude changed, and the U.S. became more involved in the organization, including peacekeeping initiatives. For a while, the United States continued to be involved with the UN and its peacekeeping operations, providing financial and military support. After the beginning of Trump's term, the U.S. reduced its cooperation with organizations. It stopped being a member of some internal UN organizations and significantly lowered the amount of budget that

would go to the United Nations. President Biden's administration calls for increased involvement with the organization; however, the American administration continues to view the United Nations as a venue to advance its national interests.

Results. In the previous part, we looked at the historical overview of UN PKOs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the American involvement in them. One of the main features of U.S.-UN cooperation is the motivation behind the USA's support for the organization and its peacekeeping missions. It is not only the national interest of the United States that drives them to support peacekeeping operations; it is also the idea of American exceptionalism.

While American exceptionalism is not an official doctrine of the United States when it comes to foreign policy, Barack Obama and Donald Trump recognized it, despite their very different attitudes toward the UN. Both have talked about the USA's uniqueness on the world stage. It is also possible to trace discourses of American uniqueness during the Cold War era and after. This belief in American exceptionalism manifests itself in different ways during UN PKOs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The U.S. has financially contributed to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, in many cases more than other countries in the world. Such contributions allowed the U.S. to influence the direction and nature of these operations and direct them toward American interests on the global stage. What we also see in the example of UN PKOs in the DRC, USA, is their selective engagement in them. The country's leadership oftentimes prioritizes the national interests of the U.S., which does not always align with the UN agenda. In the 1960s, during the first UN Peacekeeping Operation in the Congo, we can see the U.S. government coordinating and focusing more on its cooperation with NATO countries than its cooperation with the United Nations as the organization representing a broader membership. The same tendency can also be seen in the years following the 1990s. On top of that, concerns for the sovereignty and autonomy of the United States have also been expressed by American politicians when it comes to cooperation with the UN. President Trump, in this case, declared policy priority to preserve U.S. autonomy from the United Nations.

American exceptionalism has a significant role in U.S.-UN cooperation. While the United States has contributed resources and expertise to the United Nations, engagement is often characterized by the desire to balance its uniqueness on the global stage, maintain autonomy, and influence other initiatives. The complexity of this interplay between exceptionalism and cooperation influences U.S.-UN relations.

Conclusion. This article investigated the American involvement in UN Peacekeeping Operations in the DRC. From the analysis presented in this article, we conclude that the American approach to the operations shows that the USA acts in its national interest but also in accordance with the notion of its uniqueness. The combination of American exceptionalism and national interest is crucial to understanding the nature of U.S. policies. From the analysis in the article, it is clear that national interest defined the approach the USA took toward the United Nations in the 1960s and 2000s. During the Cold War, the goals of the United States in an international context were defined by the rivalry with the USSR and the competition for spheres of influence. Moreover, the constant state of rivalry with the Soviet Union challenged the idea that the U.S. was an exceptional country. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has perceived itself as the only global superpower, which has reaffirmed the idea of American exceptionalism.

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