

# THE LURE OF REGIONAL SOLUTIONS: A REALISTIC OPTION OR ESCAPISM?

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Depending on the nature and importance of disputes, there is a need for either bilateral or unilateral use of global and regional organizations. In spite of the convenience of using regional organizations in solving regional disputes, the growing importance and awareness of the global instrument cannot be minimized. Moreover, regional solutions seem to be less effective than global ones in solving regional crises.

The role of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security has been forgotten for almost twenty to thirty years. Furthermore, the Charter itself does not define a clear role for the regional organizations to face the current issues.

Threats to international peace come from many sources. Intra-state ethnic, religious, and political issues are threatening the fabrics of international peace and security. The impact of these conflicts can be found at both the regional and global level. The Secretary-General has employed various means of preventive diplomacy, such as good offices and the involvement of regional organizations in settlement of these new forms of conflicts.

However, regional organizations do have limitations to participate in maintaining international peace and security. The effectiveness of the use of regional actions in the matter of enforcement is not a widely shared view. In spite of some effective actions of regional organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) support in Bosnia, many believe that the basic norm should be the United Nations.

Outside of enforcement and use of force, other areas of international involvements prove the effectiveness of the regional organizations. For instance, the Organization of African Unity's

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(OAU) role in both regional and global scheme in dealing with many disputes in Africa, including Western Sahara and Mozambique, and the Cooperation between the Organization of American States (OAS), and the United Nations in Haiti, all indicate the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security.

The United Nations can provide an umbrella of legitimacy and security to all parties in conflict due to its universality and availability of resources. The United Nations has the ability to levy its members for resources and enforce mandates. Most often, parties in conflict look for international recognition and security, which regional organizations cannot provide.

Moreover, the United Nations also has the ability to see both sides of complex issues, such as in the cases of Mozambique, El Salvador, and Cambodia. Regional organizations cannot provide that much needed security and legitimacy. For instance, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) inability to solve the problem of East Timor, and failure to solve a small problem of Papua New Guinea by the South Pacific Forum without the help of the United Nations does indicate a need for strong cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Depending on the nature of disputes, regional organizations and the United Nations should act together. The cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth in the case of South African Apartheid is a primary example of what can be achieved with cooperation. Working together, the United Nations can play a leadership role in maintaining both regional and international peace and security.