

# INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Until recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, British troops since the 1960s were primarily associated with Northern Ireland, the Falklands and then the First Gulf War. However, since 1945, Britain has been involved in a wide range of peacekeeping activities and multinational force activities for the **UN and NATO**.



## Peacekeeping and military support for the UN

The first type of decision that involved the UK sending troops to support a UN Force was in the Korean War (1950–1953). North Korea had invaded South Korea and the UN voted to help the South. The UK, along with many other countries, sent Forces to help push the North Koreans back. Thousands of British troops fought alongside American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, South African, Turkish, Thai, Greek, Dutch, Ethiopian, Colombian, Philippine, Belgian and Luxembourg troops. Over 1,000 British Service personnel were killed.

More recently, in the 1990s, British troops took part in important peacekeeping activities in the Balkans in Europe. The British, along with other UN member states, were in Bosnia Herzegovina to try and stop the conflict there.

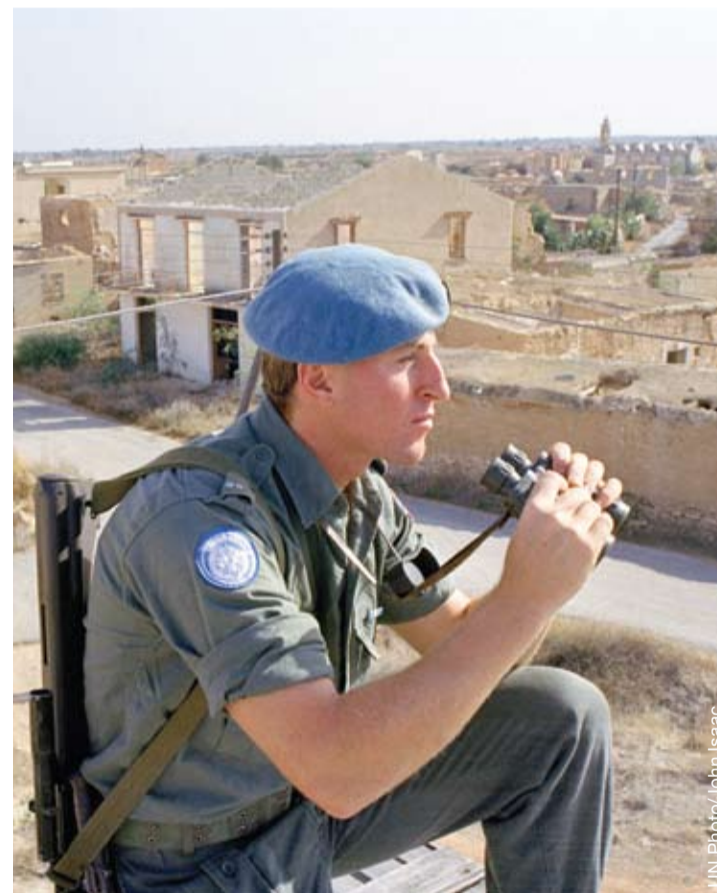
Since the 1950s, British Service men and women have assisted the UN in its peacekeeping activities around the world – events we don't often hear about because their very presence and bravery stops others from being killed.

## North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

NATO is another organisation of which Britain is a leading member. Founded in April 1949 by countries from Europe and North America, it has both a military and political remit. Initially it was conceived as a response to the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West that had developed after the Second World War. However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO has taken a more international role with an expanded membership and activities outside of the Atlantic European area. In 1999, British Forces, as part of a NATO operation, intervened in the Balkans to halt ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

Currently British Service personnel are in Afghanistan as part of the NATO contingent of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). British Service men and women are killed in that conflict regularly.

For further information, go to  
[www.un.org/aboutun/](http://www.un.org/aboutun/)  
[www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)



## The United Nations (UN)

The United Nations (UN) was officially created on 24 October 1945 when it had 50 members including the UK, the Soviet Union, the USA, China and France. Today there are 192 member countries, each with a vote in the General Assembly (one of the main decision making bodies of the UN). The UN charter sets out the basic principles for all the member countries to co-operate and work together. These include:

To establish conditions under which **justice and respect** for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained,

to **unite our strength** to maintain international peace and security,

and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, **save in the common interest**.

The second point listed above has meant that the UN has sometimes voted to take action against specific countries or intervene in certain situations. That action has sometimes had to be military.

The UN is a voluntary organisation that relies on the commitment of its member countries (States). It does not have its own military, thus if a decision is made by the UN Security Council or the UN General Assembly (the two main bodies that make decisions) then it depends on the Member States commitment to see the decisions through. If a decision is made requiring military action, the Armed Forces of the 192 member countries need to commit.