



vote counts from vehicles parked on the side of a volcano, held flashlights when the power failed to assist in vote counting and slept on the floor in remote communities to insure fair elections. All of this was historic, the first-ever monitoring of an electoral process within a sovereign state. Thanks to their preparation and efforts, there was little violence and everyone accepted the outcome. Another recent experience is the conclusion of the peace accords in Guatemala in December 1996 after 35 years of civil war. The UN Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) had been in place as a civilian mission with a human-rights mandate. The Security Council decided to set up MINUGUA as a peacekeeping mission from January-May 1997 to verify fulfillment of the cease-fire agreement. The tasks are now expanded and will help facilitate the implementation of the peace accords — commitments on

political, legislative, social, economic, agrarian, ethnic, military and public security issues.

Radio has been a highly useful and successful medium for the UN peacekeepers. In 1997 the UN was on the air around the world with listeners tuning in to UN radio and TV programs, prepared as part of the effort to move peace processes forward, broadcasting on local radio or TV. "We need three things to set up a peacekeeping mission: an office, some cars and a radio station" one UN spokesman said. These radio stations develop broadcasts to "mellow" a region, especially during the electoral process. In all cases, there is no longer a question of whether radio and TV broadcasting have a place in the public information arena, just how best to use them. In one case, the local radio was able to "establish something home-grown," providing news, music, current affairs, student and education programs.



In Liberia, a cartoon character called "Peaceman" was featured in the radio broadcasts and became the unofficial "spoketoon" of the mission.

Currently, the UN has 15 field-based human rights missions engaged in national and community-level work from Rwanda to Georgia to Guatemala. Human rights officers carry out activities aimed at reforming the penal code, the police, and the justice system, monitoring violations and fulfilling an advisory and protective role. Working collaboratively and in cooperation with other international, regional and local organizations, the preventive diplomacy of UN peacekeepers is helping the world move toward greater democracy.

## ACTIVITY

Peacekeeping activities of the United Nations fall into two definite categories: those undertaken prior to 1992 and those that came after. Each has a different objective and different tasks.

Using the enormous Internet resources of the United Nations <<http://www.un.org>>, go "on-line" to research the peacekeeping work of the United Nations. This can be done as a class or group activity. A number of students can research the 13 major peacekeeping missions that preceded 1992; the remainder of the class can examine the more recent activities.

Students will construct a "before" and "after" chart, illustrating how the role of the United Nations has changed. (It will be useful if this can be magnified and placed on display for full class discussion.)

Students will then superimpose this chart on the world map available on-line. The information on the map will be annotated with the additional information the students have gathered from the Internet site. The map is available from <<http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/dpkomap.html>>.

Students can then discuss how the role of the UN has changed, carefully examining specific examples to illustrate their discussion. In this discussion, students will attempt to evaluate how activities have been the same or different in various parts of the world, developing some sense of which areas of the world may continue to need the assistance of the United Nations.

*Material developed by Linda Arkin and Hazel Greenberg,  
The American Forum for Global Education.*