

Thirdly, regional institutions of a more structured kind can be strengthened or created to assist in maintaining international order. ASEAN provides an interesting example, especially if we look back at some of the relationships among the ASEAN countries themselves 25 or 30 years ago. It has brought tremendous change. The various Latin-American institutions and structures have knitted together more of a security community and help to explain why the ABC countries are no longer seen as an explosive problem region. The Arab League has some interesting potential. At one stage, it was the key link for promoting moves toward resolution in Lebanon and in fact has contributed, particularly through the Taif agreement. At this stage, the Arab League is bitterly divided and may remain so, although somewhere in the middle ground that lies between capitulation and catastrophic war in the Persian Gulf situation, there is a potential for an Arab grouping to play a special role. The recent attempt by the West African ECOWAS countries to apply peace enforcement in the chaotic internal conflict in Liberia is by no means a totally encouraging model, but there will be important lessons to be learned about such regional attempts at intervention.

Much of the content of this paper has focussed on the implementation, after decades of neglect, of the UN's Chapter VII provisions for the maintenance of international peace and security. As has been stressed, however, there have been many other contributions made by the international institutions to peace, security and order over that time and they, too, stand ready to be strengthened in the post Cold War international climate. One clear possibility is to strengthen the office, resources and capabilities of the UN Secretary-General to help stimulate and guide the Organization's contributions to peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building. The process of selection itself for Secretaries-General and other senior leaders of international organizations has a vital bearing on both the credibility and influence of their mandates, and two thoughtful veterans of the system have recently advanced timely proposals for improvement, geared to the selection of the next Secretary-General.⁹ The functions to be filled will include improved early-warning systems (on which the Office for Research and the Collection of Information has made a start), possible operational readiness and planning work with a Military Staff Committee, and more activity and initiative in providing "good offices", conciliation and mediation. Secretaries-General may also have to make some new contributions in ensuring that lines of effective consultation and cooperation are kept open within the Security Council, and especially between its permanent members and the rest of the member states, since