

SUMMARY OF SEMINAR DISCUSSION

I. Opening Remarks by the Hon. Christine Stewart, Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa (see Annex B)

Over and above her formal comments (reproduced as Annex B), Mrs. Stewart highlighted a number of issues regarding the future effectiveness of the Security Council. Should countries that contribute the most funding to the UN in real terms, such as Germany and Japan, be accorded increased responsibilities in the organization? How the Security Council addresses the concept of "security" is also critical, as security has evolved to mean more than simply the absence of conflict. Should the Security Council embrace a larger definition of security, as Canada has done in its own foreign policy, to include poverty, environmental degradation, refugee migration, the spread of disease, and other elements of human security? Many of the specialised agencies of the UN system have developed expertise and resources to deal effectively with these issues. But more attention must be paid to the need for preventive action, and the Security Council in particular should be apprised of the importance of rapid reaction to such threats to human security. This in turn relates to the increasing emphasis on peacebuilding, and the need for the UN response to security issues to be understood as a continuum, not restricted to peacekeeping alone. The expansion of the Security Council's membership itself also remains a difficult unresolved question, with regional representation, financial contribution, and commitment to the principles of the UN all important considerations.

II. Session One: Major Changes Affecting and Within the Security Council Since 1990

The internal dynamics of the Security Council have altered significantly over the past decade. Prior to 1986, Cold War antagonisms tended to paralyse the Council, though it performed effectively in the containment of conflicts, if not their prevention. After 1986, the permanent five members of the Security Council (P-5) began to consult privately with each other on a more regular basis, and Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar was able to use his influence to impress upon the P-5 their responsibility to bring the Iran-Iraq war to an end. P-5 work on ending this conflict in 1987-88 first signalled the phenomenon now referred to as the P-5 "condominium" over the Security Council. It has resulted in decreased leverage for the non-aligned countries at the UN, which in any event saw their flagship issues such as apartheid in South Africa and the Arab-Israeli dispute either resolved or addressed in different fora (e.g. the Madrid and Oslo processes). Cooperation among the P-5 prior to and during Operation Desert Storm in Kuwait and Iraq in 1991 reinforced great power concord at the Security Council. Subsequent initiatives in the Council, such as the decision to launch a massive UN mission in Cambodia, would not have occurred without close P-5 cooperation, which, during 1991-93, also produced an unprecedented level of Council activity. This era of euphoria was brought to a close by the deaths of 18 US Rangers in Mogadishu in October, 1993.