

Everywhere the status quo is under attack, often by violent means. The distinction between the internal and external affairs of states becomes blurred as does the very conception of the legitimacy of authority. The danger of great powers being drawn into local conflicts is increasing. It is understandable that these powers should wish to retain control over UN actions which are bound to affect their interests. It is difficult to agree, however, with the view of the U.S.S.R. that this control, including the detailed supervision of peace-keeping operations, be exercised exclusively by the Security Council and the Military Staff Committee. Even if there was a moratorium on the use of the veto, could we reasonably expect a committee of this membership to run peace-keeping operations without delay, disagreement or deadlock?

I do not think so. I believe the present system whereby the Secretary-General directs peace keeping under the guidance of the Council is more in keeping with today's blend of political and military realities. No doubt this system might be improved. In particular, the Military Staff Committee might be able to do some useful advance planning, including the preparation of a model agreement between the UN and contributing governments. It might possibly perform as well some advisory functions during the actual course of an operation. If this were to be done, its membership would need to include the countries actually doing the peace keeping at any one time. Perhaps a compromise along these lines, coupled with a tacit understanding not to pursue the constitutional argument about the powers of the Assembly, might enable us to get ahead. It is futile, in any event, I believe, to insist on constitutional positions which cannot be implemented in practice unless we are to re-write the Charter. The fact is that interventions by the Assembly in the peace-keeping field have been exceptional. If the permanent members act responsibly, it will not have cause to intervene again.

The aspects of peace keeping I have been discussing relate, by and large, to Canada's view of the world from the gallery of the middle powers. I should be guilty of distortion, however, if I did not remind you that Canada is also a Western country with a point of view which is shaped by its alliance commitments and responsibilities. UN efforts to keep the peace, I have suggested, are and will be successful in so far as they serve the interests of the principal groups of members, and especially the great powers. They must tend, therefore, towards neutrality and passivity. The participants as well as the Secretary-General must hope that the balance of interests which brought about the intervention in the first place will generate the pressures that bring a peaceful political settlement. Canada, of course, will exert what influence it can to obtain such settlements. But, unlike the UN as an organization, we cannot always be impartial towards the issues themselves. We must and do reserve the right to state our views on these issues in the framework of our foreign policy. If, in our judgment, the peace-keeping role in any particular case should not be consistent with our conception of a just or speedy settlement or with our national interests, we should not hesitate to decline or to terminate Canadian participation. If we do participate, it is because, in all the circumstances, we believe it to be the most appropriate and most helpful action for us to take.